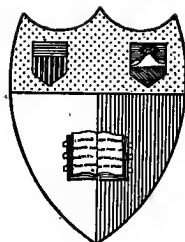


THE ROAMER
AND
OTHER POEMS

GEORGE EDWARD
WOODBERRY





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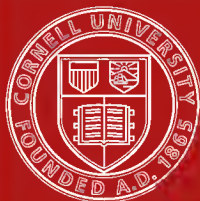
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THE ROAMER
AND OTHER POEMS

THE ROAMER

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY



NEW YORK

HARCOURT, BRACE AND HOWE

1920

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P R E F A C E

“The Roamer” was begun immediately after the publication of the author’s first verse, and, circumstances compelling its abandonment, was laid aside, the first two Books having been completed. The last two Books were recently composed. “Ideal Passion” was printed in a limited edition, 1917, intended for private friends, and is now first given to the general public. The last two divisions of the volume bring together the author’s recent occasional verse, much of which has appeared in the press and in magazines. As a whole, therefore, it will be seen, the volume, excepting the first two Books of “The Roamer,” embodies the author’s poetic work of the last five years.

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THE ROAMER

THE ROAMER

BOOK I

HARKEN, O outcast Race, to man outcast,
Into the desert driven in his youth
To lead, though mortal, the eternal life!
Once more know him, the child of earth gone forth,
In whom the spirit wakens uncontrolled,
Insatiate hope, unconquerable will!
Now over-seas he bears the human fates;
He opens mighty lands; he lieth down
In the waste places. Harken to his voice,
In this world's wilderness his living cry,
The soul of man, heard now in this new verse!
In me he is the passion perilous;
In me he is the truth all-nourishing;
In me he is the never-silent song,
In new lands rising. Watch, O Heavenly Truth!
Though past the pillars of Atlantic seas
Another earth I travel and new stars
In this great continent that yokes the poles,
Yet not from thee removed, o'er lake and plain
And all along the many-coasted land

I lift the lone notes of my native song,
And thee implore, and thy immortal strength
Which turns the breath of man to adamant;
Now, as when first prophet and sibyl sang
Empire, and tribes gone forth, and rising fates,
And with dominion thou didst equal move,
Watch where far down the world a later race,
Rimmed round about with vast discovery,
Founds milder power, and shapes of sweet, new
speech

The syllables of slow-divulging time;
Here raise aloft the world's great hope anew,
Proclaiming man, who lives in all men's lives,
What is endures, what shall be brings! O send
Omnipotently forth thy word where now
He sows the western edges of the world
With wisdom and delight and love's increase,
Till earth shall lift one harvest from one field,
Reaped by one race that shall one Father own,
Eat at one table, sleep beside one hearth,
Confederate in blessed unities,
One law, one faith, and one prosperity,
One labor looking to one end divine:
So fair a star hangs in our western skies.

Wherefore I also toil. Hear now, who will,
How first, how last, I knew man's soul in me

A greater soul, and in my mortal self
Divined the Roamer; speed, O vital verse,
And first the passion of thy boyhood tell,
And with thy youngest idyls smooth the way!
With idyls life, with idyls song begins.

Ah, then my years expected the sweet bud,
And still put forth no flower, beside the sea.
Ah, then my tender years expected light,
And saw no ray; only the wild reed mine,
And heaven-hunger, such as boyhood knows,
In me begun, forecasting some fair shape—
Frail as the visionary form that comes
On sleeping eyes, but love sleeps not in them
And with desire draws holy souls from heaven,—
Or so I dreamed; and mute the wild reed slept,
But not my heart of boyhood, swift in love;
And unto me that shape of dream was dear,
And dear the dream of music in my hand.
Then as from shadowy pines, before light comes,
A solitary wood-note bursts too soon—
Some bird hath waked, and feels his darkened
wings—

Low in the hollow of the sea-blown wood
I set my fingers to the unknown stops,
And blew; and fresh as over quiet fields
Rises the burden of the bough and briar,

New music, wild and sweet, blown through the
world,

So rose my idyl; all the valley-side
Was hushed, and clinging to my lips the reed
Felt the first tremor of immortal breath;
And like an angel singing in his birth,
Aloft the lone and mounting melody
Moved, darkling, to the bosom of the dawn.
Then was I 'ware of him I loved unseen,
An image and an unapparent form,
A little way, a little way, before.
Out of the valley, up the slopes I sprang
Toward heaven's reach; but him I could not
see,

Whom my heart hungered after, following,
Till, from far heights, the pale and streaming East
Forth from its bosom gave the golden flood
To the bare rock of beauty; down the pass
The shadows rolled away; and pine and cliff
Dropped lustre, and the smooth mist, like a floor,
Sea-deep spread round me, lifted o'er the world.
Then first, beside me, islanded in dawn,
A form of tender mould and boyish grace,
I saw him, like my shadow, stand and gaze
Upon the dense and mountainous world that lay
Like sun-struck dragons couched immutable,

Vast broods of earth-might round about us
drawn;

And straight I heard the challenge of old fame,
And in my bosom leaped the maiden heart,
And he, beside me, like my spirit shone.

Then oft between the pine-ridge and the sea
I saw him, guarded round with solitude,
In meditation lost and deeds of dream,
The poet's frailty, nursing his sweet age
On great achievement that eternal rings,
And fame to be; what was, heroic done—
Man's graven record, or the poet's breath—
He was the doer in his fantasy;
And what yet waits its passage to the stars,
In the dark underworld and womb of time,
For which a race in pain doth weary heaven,
Smiling he stood in that unrisen morn
And lined it with his glory; so he burned
In that long passion of my youth begun,
From him beginning—dark the issue is—
And what was hope in him, in me was fate.
So sweet in memory shines his fair young face,
That still to see youth's sweetness gives me pain,
Remembering all that heaven had fixed for him
To do and suffer, though at first he seemed
Not to inhabit here, or wear our earth;

He stood apart, nor knew I all he was,
Until my years were equal with love's hour
And life dissolved the mortal barrier
That from the spirit parteth every man.
Yet not with gentleness that most endears
We grew together; never morn nor eve
He gave himself all trembling to my arms,
Nor any precious seal set on my lips,
Nor used our way; he saw another world;
More than the wrath of God I feared his eyes.
Yet mildly reigned his beauty in my breast,
And more made fine my senses to discern
His heavenly portion in my frame of earth;
Until, as one who in some friend's true heart
Trembles to find the image of himself
Made pure and perfect in those thoughts of love,
Awe came upon me seeing in his face
The lineaments of my own all sweetly changed
To that ideal I hope to wear in heaven.
So with his passion blending more and more,
As the dark earth when sinks the starry West,
Mortal I moved to meet eternal light;
And, moving, dreamed how that young soul
 should be
The flaming of a torch across the years,
And through the world the rising of a star.

Ay me! but what avails to nurse the soul,
And will the better world, that heaven delays?
When hath it come? Soon gathered round his
heart—

O, too familiar to this clouded breast—
Immortal dread, awe of the alien powers
In this dark sphere,—these vague infinities
Of matter round the solitude of mind
With menace, this dull crush of monstrous force
Crumbling the dense compact, this far-strown
world,

Abysmal being without mete or bound,
With endless shadows roved; whence thought,
alarmed,

Strains in its orbit and its casing frame,
Ranges the vast, and calls from star to star,
With question of this cold eternity.

O striving Stress, O everlasting Might,
In every atom spawning energy
And cradling life in every blowing germ,
Storm of the world, swift drift and surge of
time

That lifts the swimmer to the rushing flood
One moment's space, and thrusts him down to
hell,

And rolls the next aloft, while, age on age,

Millions of men innumerably spread,
Faces along the illimitable wave,
Float up, and look, and sink,—O star-cold Space,
When hast thou answered, unto whom, or where!
O, sudden sprang in him the formless fear,
And swift the dark assault began to mount,
Motions of sorrow, instincts of despair!
Before my boyhood done, such darkness came—
Night in the soul; and heaviest on him,
Who most was born to be the child of trust,
Heaviest on him and earliest, sank the stroke.
Then, O, too early chosen, his tender heart
Broke into voice and mingled tears and vows.
He stares into the waste; nought else he sees;
Base if he go not, if he go then rash,
Yet must he go; for such a soul He made
Who made him man, and set him yet a child
Among his enemies exposed and left,
And gave his naked bosom to the sword,
His heart unfortified to sure defeat,
And his pure spirit to the bond of sin;
For high designs stern counsel; not with men
Who wheel with day and night, and think 'tis
fate,
His journey lies; O, sent not seldom here,
Too mortal is he born whom God doth choose!

Ah, yet must fall on him the heavier change,
Which who knows not, his soul hath never known
The wandering sea that moans and mourns in man,
The melancholy load and charge of song,
Voices rebellions, dismal wailing loss
The pæan of the long betrayal flung
Up from the sounding flood to sun and stars—
And souls like waves move there, each with its
cry—

The sea of life; he felt from world-wide woe,
Vague breaking upon vague, the life-song rise,
Blind music, wandering o'er the face of things,
Heard in his heart, and heard creation through.
But when the treason was, that worked so sore,
And in himself he knew the doom begun,
And felt the blood of man, is dark to me;
Only he made him friends with night and storm,
The sad woods roved, and paced the passionate
shore,

And ever on the desert's border hung,
Disturbed, distressful, watched by rising stars.
Deep in his breast the iron entered in,
Savage and sudden, thrust and stroke unseen,
And life went ebbing from his every wound.

Then by the stream that girds the world he sat,
Looking on night, and felt within him fear

Rise like a mist that blotteth out the stars.
Dark was the mind, the heart within was dark,
And all his soul was sunk in memory.
What then he was he knows whose heavy head
The passionless stupor of despair bows down
In solitary places that he loved!
So mute among the moveless stones he sat,
And hid his face within the sea's gray robe,
And heard obscure the roaring of the deep;
Till in the East the red and ragged moon
Across the hollow waters and the night
Struck on his eyes and he once more was man.
O, sharp the eternal pain began to gnaw!
Hoarse the incessant trampling of the surf
Beat up the wind; athwart the western stars,
Crag-like, hung storm, and all its heights were
fire;
And midway of the waste, 'twixt tossing seas
And those dark pastures of the roving flame,
No life but his,—and his a life bereft,
Brooding, and tranced, and full of fantasy.
The black marsh and the mounded sand stood
still;
Old willows whispered near; the beach-grass
sighed,
In the low moonshine rustling its thin blades,

And ceased; and Nature's loneliness was there
That fills the desert where God talks with man.
Scarce was the soul reseated on her throne;
Still near the dark relapse he suffered doubt;
Still did he seem to seek remembered light,
With mortal senses wakened, seemed to hear
Some far-off rally of great souls in death
From fields of heroes fallen; and his gaze,
Loaded with all divine expectancy,
Was fastened as a spirit's where he saw
Those thunder-brows of storm; o'er him they
 loomed
Like mountains fanged, upon some desperate
 coast,
Whereto the sailor drifts with asking looks
And superstition; and upon him came
That strangeness round the heart that poets
 know,
And in the swift arrest of sleepless hope
Straightway he trembled; on that chain unloosed
The lightning burst in white and washing seas,
Pale-coursing floods; and, cloven with bolts
 oblique,
The vaporous summits swam in fiery air,
Chasm and cliff dividing; pass in pass,
Gulf after gulf, deep-trenched, interminable,

With caverned vale on vale, the vast defile
Leapt up night's core; and like a man who
shakes

With hope of what he fears, he saw, far off,
The darkness, gathering up from the wide world
In his forecasting heart, take awful shape
Upon the burning glare; terrific gloom
Stood on the mountains, black with dragon-
coils,—

The vision that he dreamed, the hope he dared,
Since from the angelic flight of innocent years
There stooped and touched his lips such rosy flame
That God's might in him cannot ever die.

O, how he kindled at the very foe
Made instant visible! the fabled place,
Whose horror crests the lone eternal steep,
The goal of lost adventure, goal and grave!
There, by the slope, and worming o'er the edge,
The narrow track of noble peril ran;
And, thinly springing, many a lonely sheaf
Of beamy blades and starry-dipping points
Flashed back the battle of the dying world.
He saw—he sprang—he heard the challenge peal,
Caught like the mighty blast of Roland dead
Far-blown from standards of the fallen Christ;
And light o'erflowed within him, light long sought,

From the old sources gushing, light divine,
Whose piercing revelation nought obstructs,
Created or imagined or devised,
The masks of mimicry or vestures true,
Earth's massy mould or the dark breast of
man.

As one whose fixed soul settles to its hate,
A moment on the world's dismay he looked,
And felt the strength within him knit and lock;
Then slow a myriad glooms expanding swung—
Far off they knew their prey—and, vulture-like,
Their grim and soundless welcome fell on him.
Darkness, and blasts that made the willows white,
Blinded his spirit; moaning were the woods
With tempest, and the heavy-folded storm
Lifted its head and breathed against the stars.
Out o'er the sea he marked the moon grown
bright;

On isle and headland and the long gray beach—
His home when home was his—once more he
gazed;

How many sweet delights in one look died!
And slanting fell the silver-shafted rain,
Mist on the waters, smoke upon the sand,
And now the loud winds mingled with the sea;
But he was westward gone, his heart in heaven.

So was he driven forth and out from men.
Then I the shadow seemed, and he the one
Who truly lived; and since it so was ruled,
And in my bosom lodges all his woe,
I build the Song, unheard except by me,
That rises in his heart; and with his voice,
Whose common words dropped singing from his
lips,

My own will echo. Wherefore, yet once more,
O Muse severe, who hast in heavenly charge
My footsteps lest I fall, not without hope
Before the altar of thy ancient fire
With olden usage, holy reverence,
I come, and lay the ever-youthful verse,
His music, and invoke the Heavenly Mind:
Even Thee, who, when this whirling world began
Didst loose the music of ten thousand spheres
In one full voice that sang, and ever sings,
Glory to God: with notes below that strain—
From Thy great harmony how far removed!—
The wrath of life I sing, the spirit's woe,
Our realm of ruin; and him I go to meet,
The wrestling angel who doth wield this world
With mighty question in the soul of man
Till God shall arbitrate that argument,
Now dark and doubtful; doubtful not, nor dark,

When to the littleness of mortal act
His wisdom the eternal issue joins.
O, harken! we are young; we cry for light,
Youth's cry; but wisdom is an ancient thing.
O, raise me fallen, and restore me lost,
That I, adventuring the great defeat,
May in the courts of heaven at last unhelm,
And in Christ's treasury repose my sword!

Now the ninth year declining showed a pass
Deep sunk, whose black and monstrous horns
transfixed

The element serene; far from that shade
Roved the cold moon, and showed the savage
steep,

Whose secret heights, untraveled by man's eye,
Only the majesty of heaven stayed
With bounds, and to the wild Sierra's snows
Their starry limit set; here was he come.
So far his soul had wandered from its youth,
So long endured in pain the stroke without,
The change within; and ever at his heart
Gnawed the slow death; if thou requirest more,
Thy own breast ask, nor search another's wounds.
Years rose and set, but he was shelterless—
A man unknown save to the heavenly powers;
Alone he was, except in memory,

And lost, but that the visionary sense,
His guiding birthright, visited the dark
And drew him where the Will Divine would lead;
Through woe, and want, and wastes of all neglect,
Remorseless realms, the tracts of base distress,
The wilds of thought, the deserts of desire;
And oft behind he came who dwelleth there,
The Whisperer of the wildernesses lost,
O, winning was his voice, and wise his craft,
His early harmonies not all forgot,
That once the hymns of heaven had paused to
hear;

The fluting of bird-throated winds of morn,
The sighing reed of memory at eve,
Hope in the soul and in the heart regret;
In loveliest things deepest his deep disguise.
The gentle heart he sang, its own delight,
Virtue, the conscious nobleness of life,
Knowledge, man's earthly immortality;
And on the god's own lyre, divinely hymned,
Joy, beauty, truth, and love, and noble fame
Sprang ever, and the feigning Muses danced,
And, with the song consenting, Nature moved.
And oft the Roamer slipped, and oft he fell
With rose-snared feet, and night came on the plain;
But duly would the evening star come forth,

Making a third where he with memory sat
Keeping o'er beauty dead eternal watch,
And, shining, lift his dry eyes from the ground,
And lull the venom feeding at his heart;
Such virtue did it draw from other days;
And with its orb his lids sank down in sleep,
The soul within him slumbering, and dear light
From eyes that cannot mourn fell on his breast,
And under morning stars he urged his way;
And roaming sang; but not the song of prime,—
A music of the darkened fields of night,
Earth-sorrow, and the wandering cries of night:

“O still expectant band of singing youth,
Who from the rose of dawn steal prophecy
And holy hope, and chanting triumph go,
Filling the morning air with sacred names!
O fortunate if in your faith ye die,
While yet the sun-flush leaps from mount to
mount,
And glory's purpose dreams upon your brows!
O, one with them, me too desire has raised
To fly beyond the sensual reach of man
And break the bounds of earth's prosperity!
When hath their virtue shrunk to Nature's will?
And what their profit—do they grow and thrive?

In every land they lay them down to die.
Woe to the remnant of the noble band!
The most are dead who that dear music built—
Their hymns shall be a nation's memory.
The few ride on, their lips too firm for song;
On many a lonely field they find how hard
The bright rebellion is that showed so fair
'Gainst this world's wrong; now, taught within,
they learn
What might it takes to wield a heavenly sword! ”

He could not stay the spirit's wandering cries,
The music of the breaking heart of man,
Made hoarse by passion now, with grief grown
stern:

“ Is God then weary? has the flaming sphere,
Belted with burning noons and starred with night,
Paused in its revolution in the deep?
And that young spirit that there stands impris-
oned,
Throned in the sapphire of crystalline light,
Or in the starry concave of deep sleep
Reposes, till new dawn with rose-flushed dreams
Kisses his eyelids wide—shall he be stricken,
Creation's precious jewel, heart and eye

Of all that is—disrealmed and headlong cast,
And, prone in whirling fate and unplumbed night,
Fall with a world unhinged? because His will,
Who works in awful secrecy of change,
Conceives, creates, but knows not to preserve?
The Hand that fused the obscure elements
And cast the mould of Nature—does it tire?
When hath He called thy shoulder to the wheel?
When hath He sought thy door? or sued to thee
For thy alliance? strength or counsel craved?
O insolent! thinking to help thy God! ”

He sang no more, but silent was his heart;
Nor music knew, save, as one hears in sleep
The wild wind sighing in an outer world,
He heard around him earth's old cradle-song
Of wood and wave, life's grieving undertones;
Or the deep chord of color, or lyric form,
Motionless charm, with sudden piercing pain
Made his blood wild; and if at times there woke
Rapture of heart and ecstasy of soul,
They were the spirit's intense agony;
And earth more beautiful, and love more sweet,
Were unto him increase of loneliness
The long, long years. O, wherefore should he
sing!

Many the lands he saw, the seas he ploughed,
Seeking to find, wherever man had been,
The ways of beauty and the face of love;
But evil things he found,—evermore saw
How human wisdom like a suppliant bowed,
How human love, sad-eyed, did lift her prayer;
He could not slay the pity at his heart
To gladden in himself; he could not still
The noble strife of thought to gain his peace.
So struck the world's life in his single breast,
And set his nature with itself at war,
That half he was knew not the other half,
But, each to other, heart and mind, moved false,
Though to itself each true, as conscience bade;
Such discord ruled; oft to himself he seemed
Some unbelieving knower of things true,
Some loveless lover of things beautiful,
Some godless worshipper of things divine;
And beauty without joy, truth without faith,
All holy sanctities made soulless things,
Contrary currents, spun a whirl wherein
Sank action, passion, meditation down
Lost in himself; then, as the poets tell
Of that first strangeness of the world to sense
In early boyhood when the swooning earth
Drifts off unreal, and hard they grip the ground,

Before his eyes all fixed, corporeal things
Melted to vision, his habitual world;
And all experience to his hand was clay,
The stuff of life, wherein his moulding thought
Mysterious moved, and fashioned, like a god's,—
The poet's art—instinctive in his life,
Not for the world, but his own natural breath
Whereby he greatened and grew into man,
True man and whole, at one with this dark frame,
By penetration mastering the sphere
In secret study, and at one with man,
Merging with men by love and sympathy
And old imagination's fusing might
Confederating man in human fate.

Now on he bore unto the place of dread,
Youth gone and manhood come; soon should
his soul

Encounter fate; slowly those mountains rose,
And morning turned to night upon their slopes,
And in their shadow now the Roamer moved,
And nothing else but that great vision saw
Of earth or heaven or any human face.
Up soared aloft the lone eternal steep;
He knew the Range that borders on the night—
To North and South its summits blocked the sky,
Before in silence stood its awful front;

And, irresistible, the terror fell,
And, irrepressible, the longing broke,—
Terror that seizes on the spirit spent,
Longing that swells within the homeless heart,
To yield the soul's adventure and the search,
To kiss our mother-earth, and so to end;
And o'er the long years trembling came the
 song
From that fair valley where his joy began,
And bird-like beat against his prison bars:

 “The new grass springs, and red the willow
 glows;
O'er fallen showers, sweet-breathed, the rainbow
 smiles,
And sunset floods the fields; as in a lake
Reflected lies the bow along the grass
Rain-beaded, and is brighter in the grass
It lies on; in the black loam gleams the plough;
And all the land is freshened with the rain.
Now twilight falls, star-clear; the flowers shut;
The hills shine low—O, wilt thou never come?
The woods oblivious, venerable, dim,
Loved by the winds, and loved by quiet stars,
Listen for thee as for the feet of spring,
And ‘O sweet truant’ cry and cry in vain;

‘ The singing birds are come, but not thy voice; ’
And to the sea they send their fragrant breath—
‘ Roams now the Child in thy dear charge ’ they
call;

And voiceless is the beach, and echo flown;
And Ocean’s self, whose benedictions move
Still blessèd in thy blood, sets in to shore,
And landward calls the wandering waves with
him;

But One no more he shepherds whom he loved.
O, thou ungrateful, why dost thou delay?
Too far into the West thy roaming is!
Too long upon thy ocean-cherished eyes,
Brown, bleak, and bare, withers the wind-blown
waste;

No fresh-turned field, no glade of violets there,
Nor far gleams of the emerald winter-wheat,
Nor drifts of orchard-blossoms on the hills,
Nor garden-plot, nor tree, nor lilac-spray!
Now homeward through the moonlight-darkened
fields

The lover goes; the fire-flies flash; but he
Sees one sweet face that held the rosy West ”—

As one who thinks of her he may not love,
And feels his eyes o’erbrim with wasted light,

He sighed, and, sighing, kept the herbless way.
Beneath the gorge a stronger music rose,
And swept a noble anger from the strings,
The chord of glory smote,—loud rang the song:

“ Ah far behind, ah far behind thee rise
The towered cities where the people toil,
Builders of life, as their dead fathers were;
And, as their fathers, still they seek the man
Heroic, framed for action, loving Christ;
The laurel withers while the tribune waits;
He fears, nor guesses how his thought shall burst,
The hope that gathers in ten thousand hearts,
The sun-like deed that blesses half the world!
Weak is his single might, but strong is man’s,
And giant-like bears up from age to age
The starry load. O, let the burden fall!
Weep, O lost people, for the Leader lost,
Into the desert gone, the forfeiter!
His heart shall dry, his dead soul drags him
down;
The plague shall prosper him who hath forgot
The cords of birth, of country, and of kind,
The bonds unforced and mystery of love,
The heaven-conjoinèd league, the state to be!
Friendless he goes, nor gives his brother aid;

Tribeless, his ancient heritage betrayed;
Alone, he is belittled to himself!
O, heavily fate's scorn shall fall on him;
Far in the waste upon his track prowls death;
Unmourned he drops; unburied shall he lie;
The wild beast's portion and the vulture's perch;
The outcast, whitening in the passing winds;
The fool, erased from human memory! "

“ All ye remembered years, upbear me now! ”
The Roamer cried, descending down the dark;
And he was shut in that tremendous pass
Whose exit lay on sky-hung capes unknown,
On seas of death perchance; for well he knew
The frailty that the wasting years had wrought,
And his stern need, O, not of youth's green
 strength
Undisciplined, but that all-secret proof
Which from defeat its perfect temper takes,—
The wisdom of how much the weak can dare;
And he had learned in what close mail he goes,
How steadfast, who doth own his ruin just,
But dares despair not of the deeds to be.
The hollow track fell downward through the
 gulch,
By dropping eaves and cones of shadow swept;

And straightway to a sinking gulf it came,
Tortuous and vague, with glimpses of the moon
Seaming the rock far on; sheer from the pit
The wall adverse, one bulging precipice,
With random ledges ribbed of pine and fir,
Struck heaven, and eclipsed the highest stars;
Upon the hither side the fissure hugged
The scaling way, and from its hungry gloom,
That felt the beam of light in his young eyes,
The blind deep seemed to heave its wandering
arms.

Upon the brink profound his cold hand clung,
Now, past the jut, pursued the crumbled shelf,
And won beyond, where cliffs retreating rolled
A vast moraine, steep-furrowed by old floods—
Far-reaching swells, like billowy seas aslant,
Where many a rocky bed poured headlong down;
And higher up the swaying slopes he rose,
And further to the rent the rough slide fell,
O'er which the loose stones clattered, heard no
more.

The winds dropped down; black clouds like bars
shot o'er;

And, opposite, the pine-sheathed mountain moaned.
On many a mortal death he set his foot;
Not these he feared; he feared the heart within;

Treason and guile he feared, and silent arms.
Then stooped the foe, no more as when he shone
Upon the front and promise of this world
The morning star; nor when in gloom he came,
Not less majestic than the eternal force
And regnancy of Nature; dark with peril,
And to the death engaged, his war drew on,
Winding like thought within the doubtful brain,
Warping imagination to his will,
Transforming to his semblance every sense;
And in the spirit, ere the mortal throe,
Failure foreseen, and scorn to be betrayed,
The yearning of the long impetuous years
To loathing turned, the dying flame of hope
Leaping in anger at the long deceit;
And utterance indistinguishable arose,
That sometimes on the waking sense alarmed
Strikes undetermined whether thought or sound;
From crag and cleft "this air-built goal" it shot,
Doubtful, and fled upon the vagrant gust;
"Courage," it shrieked, and leaped in the abyss;
"The hounds of vengeance on his track are hot,
Therefore he hastes," it struck the rock behind.
The lonely steep grew spectral to his gaze;
He seemed to see them spring from cirque and
cairn,

Who perished here at last,—some, trembling
things,

Dropped from the talons of the heavenly bird,
Conscience, whose quarry is the gentle heart;
Some, blown by folly or haled on by crime;
Some, led by lights that seemed earth's morning
stars,

Spirits of joyful trust, whom most he loved,
Forerunners of his hope; all darkly there,
Risen from the storm-bared rock where they had
sunk,

With presages of woe, sad warning, stood;
And still the apprehensive heart of man,
That will not all obey, brooded within.
And long the Mocker warred, whom all men
know,

To make illusion of his lonely trust,
And ill foreboding of his broken life,
And dark suggestion of the woe within;
Now he unrolled dead time's monotony,
The jester's scroll inscribed with golden tales
Of noble spirits in their ecstasy
Destroyed; and now he showed the peopled lands,
The world of men, the pity and the woe,
Shame, penury, crime, folly, and ill desire,
The faiths that were, and last the pallid Christ,

And gray despair re-settling on the world;
Till on that slope, as from the visioned mount,
The Roamer saw the kingdoms of this world,
O, not for glorious conquest, but despair,—
Craven and conqueror leveled in contempt,
Him foolishhest who most would save the world!

The moon dropped down behind the shoulder-
ing rocks;

The gauntlet narrowed on; the cliffs closed in,
Age-shattered spurs compact of rocky spires,
Slim monoliths and boulder-pilèd towers,
Fantastic masonry—earth's nakedness—
Dark colored veins of purple porphyry,
Volcanic thrusts, dull spots of hematite,
Chaotic sediment; there, as he stood,
He held the skull of Nature in his hand
Musing, and curiously turned it o'er;
And versed he was to read what there is found—
For some is known, and some is darkly guessed—
The cosmic tale that vaunts its ignorance,
No chaos, no catastrophe, no more
But definite order in indefinite time,
Events, successions, processes, fixed change.
He touched the gray grooves of the icy flood,
The delicate print of tropic fern and flower,
Strange petrifications of the forest; saw,

So were his eyes anointed with their lore,
The bones of mammoth bedded in the clay,
Reptilian birds, the horse's five-fold hoof,
The buried drift of antenatal earth,
Transparent ruin; backward spun the orb,
Whirled through the seethe and steam of fusing
fire,

Metallic vapors of the molten globe,
The planetary star, the comet mist,
The sun-belt meteoric—fleece and flame;
And finer than all vision probed his thought,
Bared Nature's pulse, told the electric throb
Like his own blood, beats of ethereal force,
Laying his finger on the element.
Then, startled, he remembered what man is,
Hidden in this dark corner of chilled space,
His history with all its circumstance,
Races, religions, policies, archives
Of scripted wisdom, monumental war,
The passing of a grain of that gray sand
That measures Nature's period,—a drop
That falls within the glacier's blue crevasse,
While the slow frozen motion creeps along
Through ages, and the sun expires in frost.

Death-cold he turned; the leaping trail abrupt
Sharp to the right struck up the mountain's face;

By matted vines he hung above the fall;
By jag, and cranny, and rock-withered root,
From doubtful hold to dangerous footing passed;
Nor less did Fraud mount with him unperceived.
At last upon the topmost naked ridge,
Between the great seam and the hanging bank,
He sank for rest, feeling his strength at ebb.
The lower pass beneath him lay unrolled,
A tangled murk of rock and awful shade,
Most like an inlet thrusting gloomy reefs
Up from the sunken vale,—his world that was,
And through its stony heart the black gash drawn.
So far his feet had pierced into the night,
Such labors done had stamped out all return,
Such grim despair had cut him from his kind;
And in the narrow onward what should lie
More than the bare couch of a lonely grave,
Where never one of men should find the place?
Then leaped the arrow in the open wound:
“Go, if thou wilt, O following with the stars
That rose with thy creation—unbeloved,
Inglorious, though love and fame without
None finds the wholesome uses of his life;
He who forsaketh all, him all forsake—
And this thou feelest; now go mix with those
Who in the creature the Creator slight—

So in themselves abject is God disprized! ”
And silence fell—far off the dark voice ceased.
Then desperately he rose,—“ Something remains;
There is a failure worse than all defeat—
Not to attempt; yet there endureth strength
To fail with,—so to mix with those bright names,
My lovers lost who beckoned me afar,
Dust with their dust commingled, soul with
soul! ”

So sad a courage seldom wins its way;
And ever as he went his thoughts moved back,
And knowledge, gathered in the wasted years,
Poured its dark flood upon his flagging mind,—
Of heartlessness fixed at the core of things;
Of one blind Will that is the Universe,
Illusion made in man’s intelligence,
Pain in his heart, and life its striving woe;
Of instinct never swerving from the line;
Reason, the instrument of all mistake,
And appetite, the passion multiform;
And from these two, that couple in each deed,
The birth is pain, and still increase of pain,
Though oft in joy disguised, but quickly found.
O, only he of men is fortunate,
Who on the seas of slumber dreamless lies,
Thrice happy if he drift unwakeful on,

Nor ever into any harbor come!
Shimmers the Sphere within the mind alone,
Hung on the breathing poles of thy dense life
Only revolves,—thyself, thou art the Lie!
Then live no more, but with the bullet league,
Thrust with the dagger, bruise the herb of death—
And perish; instant, at the very stroke,
The sparkle of the globe like dew exhales,
And vanishes; as, when the sun goes down,
Night in the twilight clouds the purple deep,
Ungirds the robing flame, and heaven is dark!

More sad, more deep, with darker currents
flowed

His moods in bitter channels; doctrines old
As is the heart, with ancient sorrow hoar,—
Of guilt once acted no remorse annuls,
No penance stays its injury to men,
And no forgiveness cleanses from the soul;
Incorporate with the world it works till doom;
Still memory points and names the brutal stroke,
Or self-inflicted, or another's wound;
And closer shuts the strong-knit frame of things—
The clearest vision so with error blurred,
The strongest will so palsied with defect,
That evil still must come, and woe to him
By whom it cometh, those on whom it falls!

O prison of souls lost, abandoned, dead,
Time cannot crumble! and the captives there
Lay the base courses, and themselves immure.
Deep sink thy founding piers; thy mighty girth
Doth man encompass; thou shalt reach to heaven!
Life after life, race after dying race,
Mine thy dark quarry, hew the living block,
Lift the long work, a generation's toil—
Strong art thou built, O thou Eternal Stone!

As one who lies submerged in shallow sleep,
Whose thoughts interminably stream along,
No choice, no purpose, no volition his,
He drifted masterless, no respite given,
No lovely thing to steal him from himself;
And round his heart while weaker grew his
strength,
Some strangling evil clutched, and seemed to
rise,
A shuddering coil, and breathed upon his brain.
So like a man who sees not, on he went,
Stumbling to death; and low he heard him sing
Who of the heart's voice makes his falsest lie:

“Of all the Immortals kind was only He
Who on the fringes of the eye hung sleep,
And with death's stolen dew made sweet the lips!

O thou who darest to tread the Eternal Wild,
On heavenly pity leaning, hurt to death,
See, every herb and flower of ruth is here.

Or wilt thou suffer long, and bleed away?
Strict is the recompense—one lonely grave,
Spread on the rock or flower-strown in the vale.

Or dost thou think, on that dim verge arrived
Where sits the Eternal Hunger, thou wilt glut
With thy poor morsel life the famined void?

Aha! the breasts of life are sweet to suck
When to the innocent mouth they give the milk;
But thou—thy innocency is forgot!

I am the way unto the place of loss;
The Death indeed I am; and mine the art,
Mine, only mine, to still the Serpent's fangs."

Bitter, and hoarse and short with struggling
will,

The cry broke from him in his misery:

"Sleeps then—man am I—sleeps because I die,
Sleeps in man's heart the writhing worm of hell?
Had I sought peace, peace long ago were found.
O cruel guile! O pitiless! to make
The sorrow of the soul thy instrument,

And ruin with what saves, if aught! ” He turned
Into the dark beneath the great stone brows;
“ O fertile Falsehood! fool, to think him known
Who draws his cordon round the mount of time
And singly doth beleaguer the whole world
That there sits perched! races and states opposed,
And God’s alliance! yet each poor soul doth press
As it were all his war! drop not thy fence,
Nor think thyself secure though angels guard;
Keep watch with all thy gates; within be stern! ”

Once more he taught his spirit to endure
The rugged track; o’er crevice and high ravine
Great huddled peaks and ridges bulked in air,—
Rivers of ice, vast copes of ageless frost,
With glittering bergs and thin crevasses hoar,
The waste eternal winter; loft on loft,
The rolling snow-field whitened the great skies;
Now nigh to heaven he rose and prospects broad,
Out of the silent valleys drifting death,
On great plateaus that should command the
world;

And ever where the far horizons flung
Round him with mightier folds the starry robe,
He read the man-myth on the shining hem,—
Iràn, Chaldæa, Egypt,—and more late,
Divinely springing from the Olympian mount,

The torch-race of the ever-dying gods,
Orb after orb of throneless deity;
And spectral o'er him broke in that frore air
The burnt-out hopes, and ghosts of prophecy,
That once from holy hearts rose charioted,
And in the zenith hung their mighty faiths,—
Visions of old, by every mastering race,
Set in the blazing zodiac of time;
The fiery pillar that brought Israel forth
Rose like an exhalation; flaming stood
The Cross that went before imperial Rome;
Pale swam the moon of Islam dropping blood;
And out they flickered, brief as shooting stars;
Then dark the slow recovery of his sight,
Weary of all that never ceasing death,
Saw Lethe roll against a purple dawn,
Weird as by breadths of watery gloom far North
The sun at midnight sheds unearthly morn;
Saw still Avilion on the unvoared lake,
Dim, dusky, fragile, like a flower of night
Half-open to the white and slumbrous moon;—
“Peace, if not hope; death, if not life; calm death
That of the grave keeps but tranquillity,”
He murmured—snatches of remembered prayer;
“Not mine, no longer mine, no more,” he mused;
“O, for Thy service build Thy Strength in me

To do Thy will unknown! " he pressed his heart,
And, patient, climbed against the barren skies,
And, fain to see, saw not; " nay, not the sight,"
He sighed, " the very truth, man's miracle,—
Not in the heaven of heavens, eternal built,
The city shining down the fadeless stars,
Where no night is, nor ever falls a tear,
Hope cannot die, and memory is not pain,
And there no partings are, but love is all."
The summit of the pass could not be far.
With bold, strong curves the ice-ribbed floor
pierced on;

Loud fell his footstep; sudden opposite
The mountain broke, one headlong precipice,
Upon the western stars; and, crest on crest,
The pale ledge, like a billow of the night
On shores unknown, bore him upon his fate;
Almost he hoped—was there indeed an end?
Low in the sunken West the red moon flared;
A savage land rolled on the vacant air;
The sloping, vast, dead wilderness—'twas all.

There ran the swift descent straight to the
waste.

O, evil was his case! down, down he went;
Little he thought save that his grave lay there.
Now had he borne his body to the death—

The passion spent, the corpse at last would fall.
And many a sign came whispering of the end;
All helplessly he felt the loosening life
Waver from sense and flutter from his will;
And, as o'er dying men comes fantasy
Of their own selves beside them waiting lone,
A phantom seemed to reach, with motions dark,
For pity and comfort in its solitude;
But he neglectful walked, remembering all
The passion and the loyalty of years.
The peaks sprang up behind; woods arched
him in,
Unmindful, and on swards of grass, he came,
Nor knew he moved, and death was in his limbs.
Ah, yet once more, out of the dark obscure
Earth's wheel of torture heaved his soul aloft,
And Nature rallied for her last farewell.
Then was he 'ware of strange lights in the North—
Pale silver gleams on banks of emerald shone
Changeful, and now a drifting rose, and now
A thousand shadowy rainbows wavering;
And lone thereunder, laid by pine trees hoar,
He saw a youth, and broken in his hand
A reed of nature set with golden stops.
He drew more near where on the brown he lay,
And knelt, and took his head between his hands,

And parted the fair hair from off his brows.
Upon his own dead face he seemed to look.
He could no more. He sank to earth. "Would God
Might press the sponge of death upon my lips,"
He murmured; and again by that far sea
He seemed to sit, again he died to light,
And on the burning darkness came the gloom,
Terrifically near, his soul's eclipse,
And in his ears faint rang the dying blast
Of Roland dead with all his chivalry;
Then Roland's dark breath seemed with his to
mix,
Head laid to head, the heroic kiss of death;
"*Non sono traditore*," low he sighed;
And ere night sucked him downward, in that
dusk,
Even as the flown soul to the body seems,
Borne on the drifting dark the past went by
Crying, and on its forehead was a star.

THE ROAMER

BOOK II

“Is the earth heavier for the corpse that lies,
Or lighter for the spirit flown away,
That she has fixed so deep the lust of life?”
The Roamer heard; and as from tides of night
Earth seemed emerging round him; the white
moon
Lifted the low hills from the raven shade;
And like the eternal deluge petrified
In heaven-shouldering billows, the black Range
Bore up the snowy threshold of the stars;
His soul yet felt its dread, his heart its chill.
That one who had renewed his pain stood
nigh
In the bright glitter of the mountain moon,
A youth thought-worn; the color of his face
Hovered between the bloom and bronze, nor yet
Had time renewed in him his twentieth May;
Upon his full brow moulded tenderly
The morning sorrow of our life sat throned;
In meditation lost he muttered on:

“ To live—what is it? save with savage use
To slay the beast, and drink the battle-rage?
To strike with Nature compact the most foul,
And bloody league? or at the veins of gold
To suck, the vampire of the commonwealth,
Deal indirectly, safer than sword-play,
Do murder in a mask? and wherefore, wherefore?
To see the sun and moon and stars go round?
Nay, lust, ambition, avarice set aside,
The world put underfoot, what hope remains
To graft on Nature true nobility?
Nature refining still destroys herself;
Briefer the date, more frail the tenure is,
In that same measure as the soul ascends;
And death and madness crown the climax up;
But the coarse multitude she floods with power
To break the wise, to crucify the good,
And to the block bring true nobility;
And souls that will not commerce with her force
Are from the juices of our life cut off;
Cut at the root is true nobility;
Or if, though rare, it puts forth its green shoot
And glorifies the soul in which it grows,
And opes love’s passion, deepening bloom in
bloom,—
Divine desires innumerably born,

Insatiate, incessant, mystical,
From uncreated beauty procreant,
As in the inexhaustible far East
The eternal Daybreak from her rosy orb
Millions of mornings casts—O Ecstasy,
Lead me no more that way where reason faints,
Forever lost in visionary things! ”

The white melodic motions of his throat
With rounding throbs of pain convulsing shook,
And down the dark head dropped with sighings
low;

Then such a look he flung upon high heaven
As seemed to pluck his soul forth at his eyes;
And the heart heard him ere his quick lips
moved:

“ O Love divine, thou art our misery!
Our mortal make bears not the joy supreme
Save for an instant. Go, poor lonely fool,
Thy taste of heaven hath made a famine here
No sun of earth shall e’er replenish more!
Go, house henceforth with his less happy lot,
Not rare, whose true nobility was made
The snare to trap him; now strike hands with him
Whose high-wrought passion met the unguided
blow
Of fatal circumstance, and warped aside

To make love do the bitter work of hate!
And shall we for the chance of temporal bliss,
The one in thousands, for some trivial thing,
Submit the conscious spirit to the shame,
Or cheat life's blossom of its bitter fruit,
And dying find the near way to the grave?
Eternal Vengeance! Who that hath a soul,
The match of knowledge, would not break the
bond,
The base, base thralldom? who would tame his
will,
That from heaven's justice takes its liberty,
To do the lecherous and bloody act
Of natural being? who would game and lie,
And shrink into a cruel selfish heart,
To lord it o'er this serf-society?
Great souls might conquer pain; loss nor mis-
chance
Can touch their essence; but 't is evil fixed
In the creative root and lift of all
The massive constitution of the world
That bankrupts hope; and who that lives escapes?
God's pity! when obedience makes us slaves,
Rebellion is the badge of loyalty!
To keep free souls is true nobility.
Unburden, breath, and thou, fine frame, unlock! "

He struck his breast, and woke amazed, and
looked

On the lone Roamer and the quiet stars.

But, soon recovered, wondering he spoke,
And gentle was his mien though hard his speech,
And eased with pity fell the words, half scorn:

“Deignest thou yet to wear the bloody doom,
That manacled in flesh thou comest here?
Strip off, strip off, and let the soul go free!”

The rich tones, haunted with unmating love,
Ceased; nearer now, o’er-bent, the fair young face,
As in clairvoyant Aprils of the boy,
With sudden wistful changes softening,
Sweetened with such a look as lights all years,
When soul on soul pours intimate its might,
And well the Roamer knew that great appeal.
O love-starved heart, how gnawed thy hunger
then!

Fain was he to embrace him, found at last;
He would have sprung, and fallen upon his youth,
Breast upon breast, and head to head laid close,
So was he inly moved with sudden trust;
But in his soul he stayed, nor tore life’s veil
Between them, answering, “Nature’s mould I
wear,
Nor yet of her dear motherhood bereft.”

That other's eyes filled their blue deeps with fire,
And fair the spirit floated in his face
Brightly upraised; there life's mysterious throe
On every feature set its delicate seal.
"Her child!" with echoing lips, he seemed to say;
"Dear motherhood!" he sighed, half-heard; and,
rapt,
Thought gathered in him from the speechless
deeps;
Then broke the sounding wave: "O mother-
might!

O passion of the child-heart streaming back
Upon the breasts of being! O first sweet throb,
When from the ocean-filling horn of morn,
And from the porphyry-clouded font of eve,
God poured on me the rose and amber light
Baptismal, and my soul's awakening was,
And all my boyhood was one altar-watch!
And when beneath the starry roof of years
My soul caught glimpses of this glowing frame,
This rock-ribbed base of earth, this broad-flung
sky,
This seamless air, the realm and throne of light,
This blossoming pave inlaid with azure seas,
This carve of riven-cloven continents,
This fret of rainbows and the wingèd winds,

This blaze of stars, this infinite fair world,
The express will of God, the mould of law,
Passion welled in me, and hope wonderful
As heaven's leading to its own elect,
To know, to know, to know, only to know!
And knowledge came to me that comes to all
Ere manly years." Again he found the world,
And seemed as one who masters in himself
Pity for others and his own despair.
Then by that sudden sympathy compelled,
They drew, together, o'er the softened pine:

 "Yes, knowledge comes; and joy it is at first
To be the confidant of Nature's heart,
To steal her memory, live her ages o'er;
Nor less than god-like shall he seem whose eye
Through Time's dark telescope doth stand at
 gaze

With light's first motions in the silenced prime;
He ranges the abyss, and home returns,
Nor from his instant moves,—without amaze,
Eternity shrunk to an hour of thought.
Hast thou not seen it, as 't were yester morn
And o'er thy father's fields that light went forth?
The kindle of the unforeseeing deep,
The sparkle of the multitudinous fire,
The glow and gather of the isles of flame,

Clusters along the measureless dim stream,
Star-budding power, whose infinite of light
Shall break and burst, snowing the million spheres,
White galaxies and rosy-girdled globes,
Firm-coursing lights and tresses comet-shook,
And planetary orbs whose sheathèd fires
The rock encrusts—the early firmament,
Sun, moon and stars; and now red morning shouts
Ethereal welcome to the sea and land,
The green and azure continents of light,
Built for the haunt of finer mystery.
Long was the labor, and sweet life has come;
Housed in the shell, scarfed with the serpent's skin,
It drifts upon the sea, it crawls the ooze;
It casts its films on slime and shale and sand;
It rises up—O miracle of change!
He comes, he comes, the spirit-visioned One,
The child of promise, earth's dear heavenly charge,
The heir of all that was, the prophecy
Of all that shall be, man, the crown of things.
Take him, O Nature, flower and seed divine!
With fragrant seasons harbor him, O Earth!
Bright heaven, with lucid balms his eyelids bathe!
Thou vital air, sustain him! our rich hope,
Our bliss on earth, our immortality
In heaven!—Mockery! mockery! look you there!—

O what a sight to blast an angel's eyes
It was! the den and lair of the red strife,
The slaughter gaping from ten thousand wounds,
While like a monster on the gory floor
Life sits and gorges, half-alive, half-dead,
On its own entrails slaking its fierce lust!
There is his hostelry and mortal lodge;
There must he sleep, and there must dream and
wake,

And knead his being of the crimson spume.
Cursèd he was before he saw the sun.
'Thy life is murder,' Nature shrieks to him;
'O born of carnage and to havoc doomed,
My child thou art,' she cries, 'my prey to be;
Thy blood pollution is, thy breath decay;
Thee, too, my brute necessity compels;
Harken my wisdom, o'er all time that was,
As on the gates of life, my legend graved,
Thy body its incarnate victory:
Red is the eagle's claw, the lion's fang;
Red is thy father's sword, thy foeman's spear;
Kill, eat and die, for this my empire is.'
He heard; and sorrow with immortal birth,
First sorrow, cleft his brain; within him seethed
The working of old time and heavy fate,
Growing imbruted to the thing he is;

And evil filled him, and his heart was stone.
His generations lust and avarice were,
Since first the barbarous hordes from cave and fen
Issued with slanting foreheads, hanging lips,
Chippers of flint; new-weaponing their hate
With bronze and iron; clan and tribe and race
Hostile; and yoked beneath the deadliest arm
Conglomerate the Asian state rose up,
An army and a priesthood and a king.
Lie deep, white Death, on that hoar infamy!
Time turns his glass; far shines the Attic hill,
And sevenfold Rome o'er her dead marshes frowns,
And Carthage from her markets looks across!
Alas, the darling city barbarized;
Alas, the proud dominion's buried wrack;
Alas, the sand-blown desert tenantless!
Temples and palaces and war-girt forts,
Letters and arms and jewelled hoards of trade,
Far continents and undiscovered isles,
A hundred empires fall! nor deem thyself,
Proud age, excepted; still the reek of death
Breathes in thy nostrils; the black march begins
Wherewith the jealous nations sow revenge;
And peace in all thy borders whets a war
More fell, the mighty grapple joined world-wide,
The commonwealth a meaner mask of war,

This side for gold and lands, on that for bread;
The brawl is made a people's massacre.
For subtler arms they leave the spear and shield,
To overcome with fraud the slower mind,
With cunning to beguile the freer heart,
Purloining this man's substance, that one's hopes;
The myriads fall, the few rise eminent,
And death delaying limps as slavery,
One name of many shapes, or bond or free.
Children must eat, and women's tears be dried:
Toil on, O Worker, these are chains indeed,
And well the masters know to make them bite.
The curse be on them! men of barren greed,
Who in the sweet necessities of life
Forge the sharp axes of their fierce misrule;
Who loose the whips of hunger o'er the poor,
Themselves in plenty, fenced in sabred law,
Voracious mouths, and unrelaxing hands;
True slavers they, and traffic in their kind;
The plough, the loom, the engine,—that's the man,
And they the owners! O the ignominy!
'When? when?' the people cry, and troop to death.
The viperous knot, how hard they reach and strain!
O well may Nature trample on the brood,
And rot, a famine, where he sows the seed,
And pour, an inundation, o'er his fields,

And shake, an earthquake, underneath his towers,
And belch on city and plain volcanic fire,
Stoop in fierce lightnings, swarm in pestilence!
And he whose coming was the dawn divine,
The child in whom the morning cannot die,
Where shall he turn? what harbor, what escape?
O'erwhelmed within by fate he never forged,
The victim of primeval woe and wrong,
The sinful burden of all time his load,
'No child of hope thou art,' from all things here
Loud Nature thunders; 'the Destroyer thou,
The last and mightiest wielder of the curse,
Whose dark assault, disdaining mortal wreck,
On the eternal soul now plants the wound.'"

Then spoke the Roamer, lifting equal eyes,
Who could not stem that breathless eloquence:
"Deep is the mystery of our birth divine,
The fire from heaven that seizes on this clay
And moulds it to the spirit of a man;
Deeper the earth-taint and its mystery,
From what dark root its strong corruption grows
To eat into the soul's fine element.
Justice nor mercy never Nature knew;
Yet man she bore; and, howsoe'er he sin,
Justice and mercy to his heart are known;
And some, whose names are my idolatry,

Have risen; the words they spake can never die:
They outlive empire; they are made the seed
Of resurrection; heaven shall harvest them."

Almost that other believed what most he would.
Swift lights of love went o'er his stormy eyes,
And far within their fountains shone the soul,
Like some great spirit struggling to be born:

"And art thou of the bright world-savers? they
Who in the beauty of the Christ-flame die,
The last earth-fire ascending the lone skies,
In man's great God-dream risen wonderful,
The Star of noble nations"—his straight gaze
Swam warm and tender, piercingly he looked
Upon the Roamer's eyes, searching far in,
As if those orbs pale revelation held,
And he unconscious told what there he saw:

"Far on the track of time I see arisen
Ten thousand altars stained with innocence,
Nor herds and flocks and captives in their chains,
Nor men and women in their frenzied woe,
The common victims only; hither bring,
O Race of men, thy choicest; heaven cries 'Kill';
Shut, shut thy ears lest thou perchance should hear,
Above the dying sounds of time far-borne,
The awful accents roam the unbordered deep,
'My Father, why hast thou forsaken me!'

Crack in thy sphere, O Earth, and melt in flame!
'Heirs of the Christ, the lineage of heaven,
Whereto creation works,' great Nature laughs,
'Come, heap the altar of the sacrifice!
Would ye reverse my laws? then taste the doom!'

"O spirit unfortunate," another spoke,
"Look for no welcome here save to despair;
I hope not, but I yet remember hope,
And do thy faith this reverence"; his voice,
Ceased, but its music lingered in his smile.

"A lover's pains is all I know of hope,"
The Roamer answered; "faithful be we found
Though lost; wherefore, if ever ye held dear
The virtue that, though starvèd in your lives,
May yet on memory's eternal branch
Put forth the green and living leaf, O speak!
So on your graves may my sad laurel lie."

"Italian by thy face," that other said,
"In whose dark eyes relics of hope abide,
Fair must thy story be; let this old wood,
That nightly sighs with sad and wandering tales,
Harbor our sorrows for one cherished hour,
And thou shalt tell us of thy history
And make in turn acquaintance with our woe;
So memory shall endear companionship;
To share another's grief oft heals our own.

Reginald was I,—to what end thou seest.
I strove to solve the mighty world in thought.”

“Victor I am,” the Italian straight began,
“And with the world tyrannic strove in song,
A voice among the spearmen, angel-clear,
Till the king’s rifles rang against my throat
After the failure, if that failure was
Which to remember in the grave were heaven
And to relate even in this gloom is joy.”
So sate they down, and Victor told his tale.

“Siena—still she sits upon her crags,
And on the slope the dark-stemmed Mangia springs,
And o’er the crest the Campanile towers;
My mother, and the mother of my soul!
For from her face I did not need to roam
To find my heaven; there every rock aspires.
There once I slept, and woke beneath the stars,
And found within my bosom a snow-white bird,
A waif unknown, and stroked and loved its plumes;
And ever after was I lightly named
The boy who bore the bird within his breast.
Blind eyes that babbled of the things of sense,
Of boy and bird, and missed the rhyme of life,
The voice of promise, echo of desire!
For heavenly grace that hath made all things twain,
Doth but divide them as the hand and lyre

To free the music of their harmony.
There's nought so lonely in the world of change
But 't is the prison of these concords sweet
When hearts shall find them; therefore to the boy
Trifles are often rich in miracle;
Doubt not his treasure; rather doubt thy own.
The finding of the bird was more to me
Than the rich coffer of the earth all gems,
Than Rome's tiara to the shaking brow,
Than continents of gold to voyaging kings;
My whisper of the yonder world, my thought
Of the far country and the over-seas—
'O whence? O whence?' I asked, and beautiful
It cleft the frowning walls, and entered light,
And came again, the warm sun on its wings,
And clasped with rosy feet my tender hands,
And shared my poverty and brought its heaven.

The months rolled on and swelled the young tree's
girth;
The autumn blew and stripped the last year's vines;
The stars of winter dropped their shining strength;
The wild spring came; and as the mists of morn
Upon the azure marches far away
Build towers of vantage over distant lands,
So by the spirit's breath my thoughts were driven,
And on the soul's horizons, round and round,

Won on the shining borders of the world
Regions of vision; evermore the bird
Hung in the morning sky above my heart,
As if I too should follow and fly with it
To morrows without end; the still noon dreamt
And unseen armor on the ether clanged
Virgilian music; and the paths of sleep
Shone with white garments, gleamed with myrtle
crowns

Of youth in triumph bearing boughs of spring;
Then darkened was the hollow cloud of dream,
And, angel-watched, a glory-lighted face
Shining on heaven through flowers of martyrdom
Filled my faint eyes with peace more sweet than joy;
And still the bird in every vision flew
As he would woo me to some world removed,
Forever breaking, lingering, biding nigh,
Till came the Word. 'T was by the marble brook
That jets neglected in the gray-walled cirque
Where slept the Wolf in stone and slept the law;
Silent, I gazed upon the mightier age
Tombed in those walls austere; the bird in air
Shadowed the fountain, and a monk passed by
Dark by those snowy wings; and all at once
The poppy-branch struck on my dream-drenched
eyes,

And blackness rolled upon the solid world,
And drowned it; and there broke a yellow shaft
Like some great rift of sunset smiting through,
And on the mighty beam the bird, full flight, '
Came singing out of heaven, songless till then,
A little cluster of rich-warbled notes,
Ever the same, one thrill, and o'er and o'er,
That fell upon my heart like dropping flames,
So strange, it seemed I knew not song before.

I woke; the music slept within my breast—
And over me the ancient walls leaned down
As with some statue's marble utterance;
'How fair he comes who brings his country peace! '
I heard, as plain as winds on olive groves.
'What peace?' I cried, and climbed the straitened
ways

To where upon the City's sacred brow,
As to the breath of the Eternal Morn,
The mystic Rose of Christ unfolds its leaves,
The bower of his earthly memory;
And there I marked the priests go ever in,
Like flies and gnats; and on me came the Voice:
'Wouldst thou bring peace? Then haste thee; now,
even now,

The eagles of the Christ fly forth to war! '
The bird was gone—a white and quivering point.

Breasting the blue, far, far beyond recall
He soared, and bathed in light his new-found song.
And I arose, and as the torrents pour
In April, and the water-courses rush
To brim the river that roars out to sea,
Desire from all the spirit's heights leaped down
In wild tumultuous thought and speed to find
The ways of action and the throng of deeds;
And as, when tempests blow, the winds will break
On flood and forest, and the gathering blast
Louder and longer swells one mighty note,
So, in that hour, one nature-cadenced word
Struck on my soul, and smote its music forth,
Wild as a poet's in his stormy youth;
And with the night calm fell; and with the calm
The bird came silent home. For what was I?
A youth distrusted, unallied, obscure,
In all things poor save that one heavenly gift,
The wingèd heart within my bosom hid;
And must I loose it to the flashing swords,
And rifle the sweet lodging of my breast,
And bid the bird go sing through Italy
That song of his? No other deed there was,
No other way but this to give my life!
 '*O bella Libertà!*' I carolled out;
The bird took flight, the throngèd street stood still;

' O breath that wakes the hundred lyres of song,
O trump that fills the thousand fields of fame,
O hand of Hope, O seed of Memory,
Planting the future with the past sublime!
O voice that doth proclaim the glorious peace,
O hymn that lifts the jubilee of slaves—
The birth-cry of the nations, earth's new name,
The victory's blazon, Christ's eternal rouse!
Thy faintest whisper quakes beneath the throne,
And echoes in the people's mighty heart,
And gathers to the shout that gives God hail!
O rushing from the sun-struck mountain-tops,
O thunder-zoned, thou banisher of kings,
O sweet thy smile that brings the exile home! '

The pæan swelled—' *O bella Libertà!* '
I sent from hill to hill the singing word;
I cherished with my life the song I sang;
I poured it forth, free as the patriot's blood,
The all I was; and, lo, my chambered soul
Lived in a thousand nobler lives than mine;
For he who standeth in the whole world's hope
Is as a magnet; he shall draw all hearts
To be his shield, all arms to strike his blow.
So round my voice the globe of battle grew,
The war-clash 'gan to murmur, and my lips
Sang to the onset, and death flashing fell.

But evil, that doth cling to all things here,
O'ercame that triumph. Yet, come all again,
I'll say it o'er; the dearest word of men,
The first to seal the poet's virgin vow,
The last to wing the patriot's breath to heaven,
Is Liberty; it hath the heart's touch in it,
The pang of sacred deaths, the onward reach
Of old heroic lives; O, richly charged—
With virtue's spoils and dear-prized honor heaped,
And ventures of such make their precious worth
Should purchase heaven, if any ransom's weight
Levelled the beam of that great counterpoise
With even scales aloft; but 't is not so.
In time's dark field must mortal valor fight
And with the viewless future cope on earth.
Yet the good cause plants virtue in the act;
'T is blessed; and so, and most through liberty,
The peopled earth is made the place of souls;
And sooner shall the little life of man
Cease to be heaven's prologue than his lips
Shall be untreasured of the word of grace
That chased them half-divine. Such thoughts were
mine
Though captived—chained unto the Roman wall,
Where none but priests are free. O, them I
curse,

From blue-veined Venice to white Naples' flush,
Where'er across the square of sun they creep
Through filth of beggars to Christ's open door!
The hearts unransomed by the love of man,
The lips that lie for power and pray for gain,
The practised brains that plot the baser age,
Hunters of liberty the thousand years!
They scourge the nations with the holy Cross,
And poison in the wine the Sacred Wounds,
And of our great Redemption bondage forge!
Where lingers vengeance? On, ye sleepless hours!
And Thou, whose long age over them yet rolls—
Harvest this curse among the quiet spheres!
I know not where they died who loved my song;
I cannot suffer; joy is in my heart,
Joy of the far-flown bird, the empty breast.
I go, but him they could not cage for death,
The bird whom I had sent to fly and sing
From snowy Alp to Etna's rosy cloud;
He nests within the heart of Italy."

"A great song is a deed forever doing;"
Reginald broke the happy idyl's close;
"No poet every truly tasted death;
Yet in the world that is," low fell his voice,
Whose thoughtful eye in long perspectives sphered
The world of action, "dead thy comrades are,

though long thy verse enshrine their hopes long
dead.

long-stroke or sword-stroke, action dies away;
soon orbs the past, another dawn renews
the woundless tyrant, plated with dense mail,
and in the selfishness of all his realm
more panoplied than in his showy guards.
In song a land expires, it is not born;
and all the immortal glories of the lyre,
the blazon of eternal memory,
the pæans of lost races worn away,
the death-chants of the nations whence they rose.
The pouring music of the mighty world
ounds to new ages, and a cycle dies
in each proud epic; mute the foughten field,
broken the chivalry, desolate the bower,
sepulchred in the high-resounding verse.
All music is the requiem of the soul,
and breathes about the spirit's flight its dirge,
and sorrows in its track till heard no more."
He ended, lost in spaces far away.

But Victor followed where the Roamer marked
blank form, blunted with a thought-starved face,
that, like a listening animal behind
intent lay crouched; human it seemed, and was,
dehumanized; all head, all eyes, all ears,

The brute made brain, the crime intelligent,
Time's last-born type of man; instant they saw
The black revolver pouring livid flame,
And heard the sullen, detonating bomb,
The dread of royal capitals; he laughed,
And thinly the fierce smile laid bare his teeth:

“An ugly shape, signore; not bred like yours,
Not from the gods of Greece and loins of Rome,
Nor Roncesvalles, Acre and Agincourt;
Spawned in the European gutter-slime;
Us Paris pours, when, sick and ravening,
The beast of blood upon her entrails gnaws,
And the state cries, ‘To arms, they come, they
come!’

As come they will until the shuddering bulk
Of government misused for misery
Reels and collapses in the social fall.
March on, march on, great Host! guerrillas we,
Isolate scouts stalking a sleepy world;
Nor think in horrid Muscovy alone
We range and prosper; fast we multiply
On every barren crag where freedom clings,
On Switzer-peak, in high Calabrian caves,
Rhine-cellar, and the Belgian, Spanish holes,
And where the English speech rears her vast orb
O'er half the world, sheltering forevermore

Free thought, free speech, free acts, that make free
men.

Whene'er a king is crowned, our eyes are there;
Whene'er a workman dies, our eyes are there;
Our eyes behold the crime on whole lands wrought.
Berlin and Paris unto us are one,
And one to us are Emperor and Pope,
And one to us the working-host world-wide;
Race, country, faith, law, mercy we abhor.
O angel of the Garibaldian spears,
Your song we keep; nor only from it learned
To drive the dagger in the sides of kings;
Far lower they mine whose dynamite is thought,
Whose match, the burning heart! Wake, mighty
world,

The tyranny of gold is doomed, is doomed!
On lips of outcasts is the judgment framed,
As once before, that shakes futurity;
Then comes the great millennium; but now
Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill! " he cried, and ran.

In Victor's eyes the glory of song was dead;
And gray the smouldering spark of hope went out
That shone, their orbèd life; the Roamer wept,
But he dull-eyed sat stark; and Reginald spoke,
Of thought's stern stuff compact: " Thy holy song
Sang time's evangel pure; not unto us,

Not unto us the issue of our words
Loosed from our lips in this chaotic world! ”
And ere he ceased a voice rang hard behind:

“ Ho, Reginald! ” confusèd words he spoke,
Who seemed to front the stars with lifted hand,
Absorbed in passion, towering with rage,
And strode away; and Reginald shuddering turned:
“ Cursed are they who deify the Curse;
But let us hence; too many such as these
Come hither, passing through the night. And
thou,

Wide-wanderer, wherefore hast thou ventured here? ”

“ Serving the Christ,” he said, “ I seek the lost,
Who noble were, memory and hope my guides,
Through ways I know not of, obeying God.”

“ Who names the Christ? ” another cried aloud,
Out of the shadows starting; “ on earth ’t was said,
He sent a sword, not peace. I was his Scourge;
Where is the hand that used me? ” and he fled.
And Reginald rose, and drew them both away,
And Victor silent on the left side came;
“ Not all are noble here,” the leader said;
“ Thousands there are who haunt the region’s base; ”
And moving on, “ ’t is best to look on them
From far, nor mingle with that multitude; ”
And soon he brought them to a low-browed ridge.

Westward they thronged upon the neighboring
plain,

Shut in the low, flat hills whose shallows rolled
To North and South, as marshes by the sea,
Weary horizons; dense the numerous camp
With torches flickered, and the blaze of fires
Flared on the surge of men and sank in smoke;
The sky was reddened with the swarthy glow.
Beneath, the motley multitude immense,
Whom frenzy tore or cowering fear alarmed,
Some feast engaged, the savagery of yore,
And drove them lost to many a loathèd rite.
What fierce idolatry was absent there?
What ritual of woe, what agony?
Wild was the sight and sharp the memory is:
Some, dancing, cut their flesh with knives and flints,
A hideous jubilee; some, further off,
In sullen rage or gibbering idiocy,
Did mutilate their members; boyhood there
In clusters clung, and bright the red fire-flash
Sprang from the bare, keen axes over them;
There mothers flung their infants from their breasts;
Maidens whose lashes could not veil their shame
To darkness went; them men like beasts pursued;
And every beast had there his carnival,—
The sea-cave's brood and reptiles of the slime,

The jungle's births and dragons of the steep
Who made a plash of gore where'er they trod;
And everywhere the adder and the asp
And all the poison-headed snaky swarm
Familiar through the host crawled undisturbed,
And many a stolèd priesthood gave them food.
There puffed the smoke and showered the drifting
sparks

Like fiery scales; there geyser-like the spouts
Of random flame thrust up with forking tongues,
As that dark waste were some volcanic quake
And all the heathen race some fiendish crew.
Higher the rout, and still new horror spawned,
And lower bent the abject populace,
Defiled in body and deformed in soul,
Who served the worm with bloody covenants.
Omens and prodigies before them swam,
The shapeless imagery of earth's affright,
Worse worship urging and worse injury:
The fiery breath that from Assyria blew;
The lusts that haunt the buried mouths of Nile;
Shadows that ride the night, visages dire,
Afrites, and that vast airy troop that made
A spectral conquest of imperial Rome,
Thessalian terror; Druid witcheries;
Despairs and ecstasies and tortures maimed

That India tombs within her marble hills,
Or snowy Thibet in her caverns hides;
And whatsoever else on earth's scarred face,
On Lapland steppes, or Australasian isles,
Glares round the holocaust of mortal sin,
In horrid congregation gathered there.
O brutish souls! O sensual, brainless things!
O foul imagination and worse acts,
What night shall prison, what deep pit contain,
What justice equal that unrighteousness!
And, gazing there, the Roamer bowed in shame,
And sorrow's rush was as a throttling stream
Dragging him downward till it ebbed away
As if divine compulsion bade it die;
Once more the foul field of the lust of hell
Burnt on his eyes; but he was strong within;
And turning then to Reginald's bitter smile—
"My path lies here," he said; "God's peace be
thine! "
"Thou wilt not try," cried Reginald, with swift
speech;
"Here is no passage save for souls accursed,
Blind to the light of every glorious good; "
And wondering stopped, and fixed on him his gaze;
"Spirit of God! " he whispered, "what art thou,
That through thy mortal dark the soul doth shine

As if the gates of heaven had sent thee forth? ”
And, going, the Roamer heard him murmur low—
“ Keep him, O Shepherd of the ways of fire! ”
And Victor blessed him with still grieving eyes;
And long they watched him where he made his way
Whom willingly he would have called his own,
Had love consented that their hearts should join.

Then, plunging in the darkness, first he knew
The miracle that dawned upon their eyes:
For light fell from him and in light he walked.
And as a star that rifts the drifting clouds
He passed within the roaring gulf profane;
The spectral rack swept o’er him, sin closed round;
And no man saw him; dark to them he was,
But to his sight their secrecy lay bare;
Nor legends of the ancient time alone,
Nor tales by travellers in far countries told,
Nor gods dethroned and cities of the dead,
Beheld he merely; many a wanton sect
Befouled Christ’s name, and many a godless school
Blasphemed, miscalled by wisdom’s golden name,
Philosophy; they cursed they knew not what.
He paused not where their meagre dogmas fell
No more than where the fool his orgies kept,
Yet heard and saw; the worst no lips can frame;
Nor now shall memory draw it from the mire.

Across the plain, beneath the burning sky,
He went, surveying all man's fell despair
Hour after hour: till faint the murmur grew
Of that great river hurrying to the gulf,
The flood and drift of all the evil world;
And on the further bank he saw how pure
Is heaven, how greatly it ennobles earth.

THE ROAMER

BOOK III

"O SLEEP, the kindest helper of the soul,
Who, when night comes, dost draw more nigh than
 night,
And when thou goest, bringest back the day!
O first, sweet silence 'twixt the solemn prayers
Of eve and morn, how many peaceful hours
My hands in thine were folded, when a child!
And thou wast dearer with each heavy year,
And tenderer for the sorrow come, more soft
My head didst pillow, gavest my soul release! "
So rose the Roamer's morning orison;
And never more refreshed from thee he turned
To greet the golden East in summers gone,
Than when, dim Sleep, thou gavest his spirit back
To the dark border; trembling he awoke,
And dews of gratitude o'erflowed his eyes
For Sleep, the helper—kindest helper, thou!
Thou bearest half the weight of all men's lives;
The load thy hand unloosens at the end;
Not without thee was that far journey made.

But on, O loitering Song, nor, all too fond,
Gaze on the key, when thou shouldst ope the door!
The realms through which thou goest no pæan love.
Let none misdoubt, nor this strong record weigh
O'erlightly! little heart have I to feign:
The hand writes only what the eye beheld.

Here, too, was salutation; song was here,
Breathed from a pipe by one beneath a pine,
So fair the Roamer never heard the notes,
Nor knew what happy pause his presence filled.
"Welcome!" he heard, "not to eternal things!
No longer the divine encounter hope!
Here learn thou yet art mortal in the mind!"
"Mortal in all," he answered, "still heaven's ray
Strikes through the precious oriel of the eye
Upon my spirit." Risen, long gazed at him
That one whose impulse the wise reason checked.
"Is god-sprung vigor in thy bones infused
That melt not in this air? thou seemest man,
Still beautiful to each fine nerve of sense,
As thou wouldst be, wert thou and I alive."
"Mortal I am," returned he; "still undoomed,
My brief years yet await their manly deeds;
Across the spectral moor I come to you."
As 't were his soul's command, he bent his gaze
Who first had spoken. "Hath mortality

So long a leash? and doth thy spirit of sense
Pluck its gross nurture from this crystal air? ”
“ Across hell’s moor, thou sayest? ” a second spoke.
“ O soul of daring! art thou—” cried a third,
But on his sentence broke the other’s will:
“ Thou livest? ” and to his lips some question sprang,
And died; “ but earth remembers not my name
That, to the light ascending, clouds o’ertook;
Whate’er I was, more I shall never be.”
Then he, the poet, though denied the bays:
“ Not unaccompanied by signs of grace
Thou comest; o’er the fiery heath, whose gloom
Washes the northward, where last night we kept
The morning watch, a solitary star,
Some heavenly exile, slipped from God’s white hosts,
Moved beautiful, as in its element,
Where never blessèd light was seen before.
Heaven send us good of that bright augury! ”

Crimson and amber lapped the horizon’s edge
Like a low sea, whence rose the dawn, dark blue
Brightening with light; and, like a shallow cup,
Immeasurably broad with rolling moor,
Slated with mist, the lowlands fell away.
Morn laced the South with mountains vaporous,
Translucent films and shining levels far,
With spots of cloud and belted fog midway,

Masking a land of valleys. Still the sun
Filled the vast scene with beauty ere he rose;
Then lifted he his head majestic
Above the rose-bloom wave and amber glow,
And poured his glory on the outstretched world.
As 't were a group of hunters that the dawn
Islands in undiscovered solitudes,
Who look amazed on unknown loveliness,
Canyon, or cataract, or virgin lake,
The embosomed jewel of a continent,
There stood the little company enthralled,
Lost in their vision, in the spreading light
Suddenly captive, silently ensphered,
Oblivious, fascinated, eye-entranced;
Nor longer hung they on the Roamer's breath;
Some instinct urged them; swift they broke apart;
Alone he stood, nor saw their vagrant forms,
Coursing the gleams of morning far away.
He seemed to hail a new creation there,
And from himself projected half he saw—
Thoughts of the heart and colors of the mind—
And spiritualized it. O, high miracle!
Nor all unknown unto his boyhood dawns,
When bobolinks seemed listening as they sang
Their matin song, tumbling the liquid notes
Exultant, and to harken after them;

So had he harkened his first melodies;
And as the morning, imaged in the lake,
Gave back the mirrored mountain, hung aloft,
Lovelier than nature, so had his young world
Exhaled a secret beauty folded there,
That from himself took its deep mystery:
But now his eyes beheld a greater morn.

There was an eminence not far removed,
Whence he could view more nigh that pleasant soil,
Whose charms lay broadcast to his roving glance.
Straight on he wound by brook and blossoming
green,

And oft his gaze, on the wide prospect borne
To some horizon bound or skyey mount,
A lonely mystery, lingering stood fixed;
Or from blown ridges of the upland caught
Firm lines, or flooding color from the fields;
And as the broad rings from a pebble thrown
Move o'er still waters and lead on the eye,
So from the fair point where his sight reposed,
By momentary beauty stayed awhile,
The loveliness of earth spread ever on,
O'erflowing and embracing all he saw;
Till, on that mount arrived, the world's blue round
Encircled him with old familiar things,
One sky, one earth, one sweet majestic whole,—

Color and light and shade, figure and size,
In due proportion and perspective true;
For choice creative, mingling with the sense,
Taught his rich eye, by habit in it grown,
To look on nature, and to add the stamp
And earthly impress of the gazing soul;
So ever in the world another world
Rose fairer, by a mightier order moved;
Nature, instinctive, owned the sovereign mind,
That bound all things in its own motion fast,
Unconscious, as the dreamer fills his dream.
The heavenly faculty within him wrought,
And as from chaos drew the lovely scenes,
And hung them in the porches of the dawn.
Such power of evocation oft he used,
His birthright, in far other days than these,
And other lands, where yet on rock and bough
The robe of autumn casts its fiery edge,
Ruddying the pine-grown amphitheatre,
And in the ample distance fade away
Masses of golden woodland o'er the fields;
Or where, long hours, the misty, climbing spring
Wreathes lake and forest, thicket and point and isle,
Yellowing and reddening, and the tender green
Loops hill to hill, and with the sudden bloom
Of warm May days the horizon dapples round.

O memory-haunted eyes, that learned the light
On springtime pastures of his youth, when first,
Sweet in his blood, the bud of boyhood broke
Wide-open to the dalliance of the morn!
But here no change of season met his view,
Nor hint of birth or death; eternal seemed
The summer air, the landscape, and the sky,
And beauty without alteration found.

Before him a wide river-bottom lay,
Smooth as a floor, where clumps of elm and oak
Opened obscure and nameless solitudes,
Bathing in dawn; in undiscovered lands
Sweep such vast floods amid the fragrant wild,
And wander many a forest-mantled league
Unlooked on, till the lost explorer come,
Tracking his hopes. There plunged the Roamer
down

In that far country, sunken in the West;
And all along the steep precipitous
The mobile scene made pictures as he went,
That borrowed nothing from the poet's eye;
The landscape recomposed at every step
With change kaleidoscopic, ever new,
And crag, and pass, and vistas opening heaven
Cast dreaming beauty in that air divine,
Like shadows in the stream of being flung.

Missing Page

Reincarnations of our glorious dust,
Loaded his sight! tall peak and brooding sky
Peopled his mind with long since vanished shapes
Of classic woe and mythic mystery,
That spoke the tongues of unrecorded time,—
Antique religion, dark with human fate.
What lands, what ages there stretched out the world!
One tract was full of echoes of the dead,
Thick with deep valleys of tranquillity
After life's labor done, and dim with hills,
Where the pine whispered to the whispering plane,
And shepherd unto shepherd loved and sang.
All the selectest moments of his life
Seemed there upgathered in their visible form.
Ay me! how far it rolled, that golden haze!
Here Fontainebleau opened its woodlands warm;
There Brittany chanted its pastorals;
Lone oleanders in the gullies flamed;
Now every blossom starred the summer grass,
And now the wild path through the wild shrub ran;
And, as the long striped grasses of the sea
Breathe odors on the pure and saline air
Sweet-scented, fragrance roused him, rich and keen,
Where rounded masses of exotic bloom
Rivalled in vain the morning flowers of song.
"O rose, in which Hafiz had lodged the world!"

He murmured, 'mid caresses of his hand;
"And thou, white lily," cried he, "fit to sleep
In Mary's bosom!—what garden-close is this?"
He marvelled; and started back, as at his face
Seen in a pool, so instant came the Shade,
And instant spoke, with challenge courteous:
"Who art thou in this solitude supreme,
That wearest on thy cheek the rose of youth
And in thy eyes so sweet a violet?"
"A pilgrim come I, seeking heavenly things,"
The Roamer said. "On earth thy answer find!"
And with the motion of his lifted arm
He seemed to comprehend the beauteous whole;
More than with words the gesture gave reply;
Sternly he spoke, albeit with accents pure,
And long perused the Roamer, silent found.
"Earth be thy answer! only from earthly things
Created is this fleeting paradise,
The abode of the delaying souls of men
A little while, the spirit's after-glow,
Ere all descend into the starless dark.
As moons and comets die, so sinks a Race,
After its blaze of glory quite extinct,
To wander lampless the creative void.
How fair it stood, our Race! not that, I mean,
Which from the gates of Eden issued curst,

But that which dreamt, in sad and lonely hearts
Of lovelier Edens than their earthly fields,
And brought the mortal seed to heavenly flower.
O mystic Might! that from the soul puts forth
Its blossom, lighting heaven, till it shall close
Far off and fallen in the unforeseeing deep!
Wonderful, Earth, from thy dark soil it comes,
Flower of the spirit, in highest heaven up-borne,
Supreme of things, far-shining, the Ideal!
Clothed on with beauty of the world below,
That from the mortal senses takes its form
And radiance,—not alone the outer frame
Of eye and ear and touch, material things,
But all that loveliness within the soul,
The holy burden of its great ideas,
The splendor of its passions unto death,
Wrapping the world in little spiritual flames,—
How mounts the Dream! up! up!—born of the
dust!—

Brighter than lifted once on glory's height
The Sacred Way, that loudest oft proclaimed
Earth's victor, thronged with captives and with
spoils,
Where consul-captains of great Rome enthroned
Drew their long triumphs to the Capitol!
They on their shoulders bore the mighty world:

But here, the soaring soul on outstretched wings
Bears up the precious burden of all hope
Through dim and starry deeps, the charge of heaven.
How wan it grows, and waxes gray with time!
Beauty and glory die, and love hath end;
Mary and Magdalen are made one dust;
And all things turn to phantoms, fade, and cease.
Only a little while those glories stand
That rose unto eternal memory.
Great kings, dead emperors, in trance and dream,
Augustan shapes, grave, beautiful, divine,
Each in his shroud of empire as he lived,
Revisit my old eyes, that see no more
Immortal things! ” Reëntering in himself,
He vanished, and the breast of the Unknown
Received him unto his eternal place.

A voice rang out, far-distant: “ Where are they,
Whose names sound vaguely on this hollow air,
The fiery Intercessors, once proclaimed?
I served them; for they sent me in my youth
Visions that lit the sunlight; the thin dawn
Was thronged with angels bearing trophied palms
Toward a great light, far rising in the East;
All flowers breathed incense round me up to heaven;
The thoughts of men passed o’er me, shining flights;
And many a nation then grew great of soul,

Whose names, heard in my brain, bred mighty forms,
Like tall angelic spirits of the spheres
On balanced planets rushing, fiery orbs;
Athene, Rome, Albion, America
Whirled forward, kindling time. How should man
fail?

And ever from the deep sprang destiny,
And to fresh ages gave another morn.
I served because I believed,—a single man
Among the phantom nations. Long I believed;
For when I brooded once the wrack of time,
A fire arose within my living bones,
And rapt me, prophet-wise, out of that flesh
Which yet engarbs my thought, models my words,
Into the thoughtless, wordless infinite,
Where truth abides; great radiance entered in
The temple of my being, that shook and flamed
With silent thunders of another world,
Heard in the soul,—and, heard, they died away;
And often, gazing on a fragile flower,
Or little acts of mute, unconscious love,
Or listening to dim stories of old wars,
I grew aware of some transcendent sphere,
Of which these were the brief, decaying forms;
And, grown a man, seized in the mystic sweep
Of that which comes and goes without a name,

Up to the heaven of heavens was I caught,
Whirled like a leaf, and dropped, a withered thing.
Those musings, insights, transports,—whence were
they?

That made the pulses of my beating blood
Voices of the unknown Ineffable,
And dipped my eyes in prophecy and gleam
Of what the Intercessors half disclose,—
Poet and sculptor, painter, sage, musician,
The wisdom-lovers, heaven-dreamers all?
They, and their progeny, like leaves decay.
Where is the resurrection, O dry bones?
Answer, ye valleys of the sepulchre! ”
The solitary echo paused afar.

Nigh, from a clump of laurel, rose a voice:
“ Would I had known thee in the world below,
Athenian,” the Roamer heard one say;
And, looking, saw comrade with comrade couched
Companionable, in friendly converse linked.
The hyacinthine locks clung round a head
Apollo might have loved, so like a flower
The fair face gave itself unto the light.
The beauty of twenty centuries yet shone,
Immortal youth, upon his form divine,
And in his eyes a joyful radiance showed
The dawning of the soul. “ O beautiful,

Incarnating the forces of the world
That house in thee a moment, and the house
Grows radiant with the presence of the gods
That shine therefrom," tender and resonant,
The elder voice began, "whence came this mould
To be thy image, and envelop thee,
Imageless beauty, given unto love
Within the heart, and known unto thyself
A shadow in time's stream,—no more?" A smile
Played on the lips of the immortal youth:
"Such came I, body and spirit, from the gods,
The blossom of the will divine, that breaks
To blossom in the heavens and earth and seas,
The glow of life, and mystic hearts of men."
"As comes the rose upon the swaying stalk,
So hast thou budded on life's wind-swayed reed,
Making it fair," the rising voice began
To wing the golden words, "for from the soul
Only flows beauty forth upon the world.
The soul creates its world; and blest art thou
Who thus dost realize thyself in life,
Making thee beautiful." Slow spake the youth:
"Such am I, as when first I looked upon
My image in my heart; and, though I change,
Such shall I be, I know, at the last day."
"Alone and single in thy loveliness

Thou art forever," answered that pure voice,
Which spoke o'erawed with higher mystery,
Solemn, deep-breathed, profound: "the spirit shares
The eternity of beauty seated there
In the soul's essence, there its realm and throne;
Yet hath the soul full many an earthly change.
With worship and desire its life begins,
With love and adoration for the good
That most releases it in power and joy,
And most absorbs its joy and power released.
Fore-seen, fore-felt, fore-known in the ideal,
Beauty, wherewith it shall itself be clothed
And grow incarnate, maddens the young soul,
As if the unhewn statue in the block
Should passion for itself; the poet so,
Until he be disburdened of his song,
Is with prophetic inspiration mad;
And as the sculptor frees the marble god,
And poets' fancies people oft the air,
The soul embodies mortally, and knows,
In passions, tastes, and appetites achieved,
Its form and image, seen in this dim sphere.
Thus builds it outwardly its mortal shell,
Experience, its stamp and other self,
Making apparent what its nature is.
Here, in experience, as in clay, it works,

Assuming form, itself the masterpiece
Emerging beautiful for love's delight;
And ever, more incarnating the fair,
So grows it dear, and cherished by the gods:
But first must heavenly beauty bathe its eyes."
"Hard is experience," the youth replied,
"That works with fate and chance; other to me
The revelation was that cleansed my sight,—
Imagination's world; there elder men
Made their emotions and ideas a voice
Of aspiration and accomplishment
Unto mankind; oft on their lips I hung,
Lifting my eyes to the fair sight they saw,
Painted, or carven, or visionary sung,—
Infinite forms in one eternal found;
And oft themselves ensouled what seemed most fair.
So with sweet passion for the master's face
Did my own soul put on immortal form,
Clothed with that ray, and grew in fond desire
Of inward purity and outward grace,
Patterned upon the heroes and the gods;
For, in that plastic world of art and thought,
Easy the growth is of immortal souls."
"Imagination hath a higher truth
Than scant reality," the voice returned;
"Experience it concentrates and refines,

Frees it from time, and shapes creation's stuff
In likeness of the mind's ideal world;
Thence hath our sight its visionary ray
Wherein the painter and the sculptor see,
The poet dreams, the lover lives forlorn;
Thence music feeds on harmonies divine;
Beauty the soul creates it hath from thence,
And, in creating, takes that beauty's form;
That world, once seen, the soul puts beauty forth,
Bloom after bloom, and men who look on it
Enamored are and like unto it grow;
Then speeds the heart of youth to the most fair,
What fascinates it most, most imitates;
Such passion most maketh it beautiful.
So soul takes form of beauty it beholds
And images; yet far more oft 't is seen
In mortal raiment of divine desire;
Its heavenly thirst increases without end;
Unslaked its passion, wonderful it glows,
And fills its earthly sphere with unknown light:
Then shines apparent the eternal part
In the soul's nature, homesick for the fair,
And ever fairer as it turneth home:
So grows the soul to mortals manifest."
"Love is the great creator"; the reply
Came with the heart's voice in it, musical

With rich, unspent emotions, deep with youth;
"Let others paint the lily and the rose,
Let others carve the mortal and the god,
Let others pour celestial harmonies,
So may Love give me to be pure within,
And wear on earth his heavenly form!" He ceased,
And as with silver trumpets rang the wood,
A blare of music, and the laurel leaves
Rustled, and silence made the sound more sweet.

Ere to the Roamer's lips had sprung the voice
That rose within his heart, the tense scene broke,
As fades weird magic at the spoken word;
Only, far South, a glimmering water shone;
A wind woke moaning overhead; a pine,
Framing the offing, cried aloud. He saw
The glimmering water, heard the pine's great cry,
As if they were but portions of himself,—
So passion wrought, ebbing from ear and eye,
Body and soul, discharging the rapt mood.
"Great nature's frame!" he murmured low, "O

Thou,
The awful emanation of the mind,
The base and apex of creative power,
So vast, so trackless, so impenetrable!
A cyclone, whirling in the wilderness!
A water-spout on the untravelled sea!

Eddy of mortal dust! O infinite Sphere,
How far thou stretchest, illimitable dream!
Path of the Light! mould of the earthly soul!
The Phantom of all Immanence! Unknown! ”
His shining face seemed listening to the vague
He searched with restless eyes; a surf of cloud
Broke on the distant highlands, glittering spurs,
Whose foothills, rounding up in wooded knolls,
Arose to meet him coming, from afar.
Ridges of broken country lay between,
Outcropping limestone over meadowy gulfs,
Green laps of summer; lakes like gems were set,
And many a vaporous glen, far palisade,
Led the eye captive through the violet haze,
Where the great river wandered down the west;
But he turned southward toward that watery sheen.

Young was the heart that looked on the fair world;
Young was the foot that bent down flower and fern
Across the valley; many a faëry ring
He trod in the still forest, unespied;
And many a caverned gnome, deep underground,
Heard his faint footfall, and the elfin bands,
Hidden by bush and covert, listened nigh.
So, fancy-bound and beauty-thralled, he roved
New pastures, not like those, severe and pure,
Where first he swept the pine-bough by, and saw

The sea, aye echoing eternity.
Other this soil, rich with the rose-leaf mould
Of beauty dead, breathed forth mortality.
Death choked the vital air, as on he went,
The death of beauty; here, pink-petalled, fell
The boy-loved arethusa, golden-tongued,
In the black swamp-land, moccasins by the pine;
And every flower bade memory farewell.
Oft he deplored the blue hepatica,
The earliest darling of the wood, the hills
Long since deflowered, whereon the laden bloom
Of mountain-laurel crowned his summers up
With sorrow, and the faces of old springs
Hung o'er the last year's brown and withered leaves.
O young and tender heart that saw the earth
Grown sad with beauty gone,—“ Ay! this long
time! ”

He swept the sighing words from youthful lips:
“ The grave spans all things with a little space!
Shut in the rose are summer's obsequies!
Death links with death! ” and higher rose his strain:
“ All things decay and vanish, changing form,
The infinite variable. The rainbow's arch
Is baseless, and the azure firmament,
Drifted with snowy mountains, range on range,
Shuts, as the lily; all that's in the world

Hath but its moment of infinity,
And no continuance anywhere is found
Save in the One, the Formless, undiscerned.
Hath heaven heard Him, in what skies He dwells?
A million orbs divide the region up;
A million beauties multiply on earth;
A million joys traffic in all men's hearts.
Seek ye in multitudes the Infinite One?
Seek ye in mortal bloom the Heavenly Rose?
Seek ye in endless nothingness the Whole?
Innumerable annihilation gnaws,
And infinite division, multiplied,
Unbinds the universe. Look you, how swift
The flood of waters sweeps Niagara's fall!
The hanging mass pours its eternal curve;
It sinks in billowing drifts of radiant spray,
And each drop shares the rainbow, rising up;
And the deep, fallen river chafes along,
And never more repairs its majesty.
Even so dissolves the godless universe."
And ever, speaking, he in thought beheld
Proteus, the god, sweet Adon's garden saw,
And all the mystery of life and death,
Nature's hard miracle. "The seasons change:
'T is birth,—'t is death,—'t is resurrection,—aye
The infinite cycle on itself returns

And pauses not. Thy moment live! " He ceased,
And brightly leaped the fountain of his blood
Recurrent; joy revisited his eyes,
And beauty on his senses stole anew,
Not now ideal, the pattern of the gods,
But earthly, with the dyes and stains of time.
A deeper bloom, a more mysterious glow
Burned in the hollows of the wilderness
In whose rich glooms he sank; in that wide land
A loftier melancholy ruled,—it lay
So beautiful, so desolate, so alone,
Like a deserted paradise, grown wild.
Noon-weirdness came out of the mounded hills;
A glamour lay on the dim roll of plains,
Whose far horizons he should never cross;
And endless seemed the reaches of the waste,
Calling him ever to its unknown heart
Afar; and on his soul prophetic fell
The shadow of a yonder world, not ours,
Where man is not, nor any human thought,
Nor norm of truth or beauty or delight,
But the great globe, untenanted of mind,
Pure nature, rolls in the ethereal void;
And deeper glowed the dye in the dark rose,
And more fantastic now the orchid sprawled
Its errant beauty, and on wandering thoughts

Came drifting images, follies, grotesques,
Hallucinations; them he could not match
With truth more ancient than the heavens and earth,
The truth of reason; as from dreams he woke
To see, drawn nigh, the glimmering water lift
Horizons vague, arms of an inland sea
By brimming marshes; and a cypress grove,
Along the hither edge of that full flood,
Cast on it glooms indissolubly deep.
“Here might some dragon deity have dwelt,
And woe inhabited the wood,” he mused.
Hard underfoot the bare and blanching soil
Grew skeletonized with ribbed and naked rock.
Black in the sun, the creeping shadow fell
Upon him, entering the sepulchral grove;
Its huge, columnar stems, flame-like, rose up,
Lifting a pointed gloom in burning skies,
And buried him amid an antique wood
Of mossy trunks and massive growth; above,
Heaven’s broken spaces glimpsed; below, ’t was
 night,
And in the heart thereof vast avenues
Opened their hoar, impenetrable ways;
Whereat he paused and pondered. The thick air
Seemed thronged with unseen beings; obscure shapes
Pressed on him in the dusk, unearthly things,

Ghastly, fantastic, elongate, macabre;
Spectral they moved, like monsters in sea-depths,
Eye-witchcraft; dim his eerie sight beheld,
Midmost a stagnant pool that barred his way,
A fringe of rushes round a phantom isle;
Silence engirt it, and a dreadful calm.
Afar he heard the inland waters beat
The desert strand,—a fall, and then a roar
Of grinding pebbles under the hoarse wave;
And on him swept the mystery of his birth,
That fused his being with the visible scene,
And made his senses voices of the soul.
There, standing on the edges of the world,
He seemed to hear the ceaseless surge of thought
Breaking on nature, and himself was drawn
In the dark undertow down unknown deeps,
And aye in him the climbing thought again
Made up the steep of life in breaking waves,—
And, like an echo, there a spirit stood:
“O fallen star of morning beautiful,—
But sad thy beauty,”—the deep voice began—
“Why comest thou, breath of the living flesh,
From the lost lands of unfulfilled desire
Into the waste and turmoil of this death?
Not of our race, thee other gods protect.”
A fire-tongued crescent blazed upon his brow,

Emerging from the darkness; in his hand
A serpent wand, tipped with a pine-tree cone,
Proclaimed him Bacchanal; like bronze he shone,
The form and feature of an antique land,
Ionian Asia, rich in old decay.
“Other my gods,” the Roamer said, “’t is true;
But not my heart. What place of woe is this? ”
“Thy full brows show thee a creator born;
But here is discreation. Avaunt! ” he cried;
“Fly the mad region! fly the woeful strand,
Where beauty dies a thousand deaths in vain!
For vain the death is of immortal things,
Though ceaseless is their dying in the world.”
The Roamer marked the intellectual face,
Heavy with thought and passion. “Nay,” he said,
“I pray thee to unfold this mystic death.”
Quick was the answer, as from one in haste,
Touching the main of wisdom’s wide discourse,
As if profound in nature’s element:
“Formless is death; but life is infinite form,
And beauty is the charm upon it spread,
As on the flower of youth its golden bloom.
Instinctive passion for the beautiful
Is the soul’s character; at sight inflamed
With swift desire itself itself endues
In the fair forms through which its nakedness

Finds an incarnate nature, and fulfills
Its heavenly vigor, shines, and triumphs most;
So, form by form, it mounts eternal life.
Let passion fail, and that keen sight be lost,
Soon with defect comes dissolution on,
Progressive ugliness and foul decay;
Depraved, deformed, disorganized, and dull,
One with its form disintegrate, it sinks
And vanishes, withdrawn into the deep
That inexhaustibly pours forth fair forms.
Hence, ere they come! " He pointed with his wand
Where streamed a troop of Mænads through the
wood,
Tumultuous breasts, with torches and with cries,
And with his gesture made the Roamer dark,
While yet remote the leopard-skins went by,
Mottled like shadows of deep forest dells,
And the hoar wood with dying frenzies rang:
" Woe to Adonis! Dionysus, woe! "
He raised the pine-cone, as a wine-cup up,
At the dread name; unseen, they echoed on,—
" Woe to the singer, Orpheus! " mystic calls.
" Thy way is lost; there is no harbor here.
To each his fate! I read thy brow." The eyes
Of the dark spirit, wells of wonder, burned.
" Keep thou the heights! Follow the water-course,—

Thy guide the furthest peak! " Abrupt, he turned,
And waited no response, but instant went;
Yet oft his face, reverted, backward shone,
With the rapt look that owns a master race
Suddenly seen, miraculous, divine.
But the warned Roamer fled the haunted ground,
And, lifting up his eyes, he saw, above,
The lonely peak in heaven, and knew the sign.

After brief interval he found the place,
A valley, folded in the mounded hills,
Frequent with fall and chasm, gorge and height.
Eastward, the mass of shadow, lengthening, fell;
And, darkening, hill by hill gave up its crown.
" An hour, ere sunset, yet is mine," he said.
The waterfall came down in snowy sheets,
Foaming from shelf to shelf of bowery green,
A dropping river; thrice it laced the air,
Filled the loud vale, and misted flower and leaf
Of the rich verdure on its emerald sides.
He crossed the channel upon fallen stones;
Up through the blossomy depths he made his way
Amid the noise of waters and the charm
Of the still landscape in eve's parting hour;
And twice he rested; twice in calm repose
The storm of waters held him round enisled
With the sweet peace of beauty, isolate

From all the world beside—O blessèd grace!
And now he rose on the third crag. Far west,
O'er lofty plains the sun yet poured his light,
And, a blue cone, the lonely mountain towered.
“New lands!” the Roamer sighed; but ere the
breath

Had left his lips, he saw a figure stand
As one who waits beside the way: “Faint not!
Remember from how far thou camest!” The words
Fell like a benediction, angel-winged.
Compact of sweet affections was the voice,
That soothed the air; hushed was the atmosphere;
Tranquil all things waited day's golden close.
Again the figure spoke: “Far I, too, came
To greet thee on the road of mystery
Thou followest, even from yon shining mount,
The font and origin of all pure sight.
There is the head of this rich-dropping stream,
Which seeks the under-world; in that high air
Shadow and substance roll a common flood,
One in the other, and the wave so clear
That only by the image is it seen.
Not light itself hath such lucidity.
In such a stream Narcissus saw of yore
The image of himself,—which was the world
All subtly changed into the beautiful

Shape that gazed on him from his young heart's
depth.

So mortals see, in the dim dusk of earth—
Shadow that is, but substance that shall be—
The infinite beauty of the world diverse
Grow one and integral in fairest forms;
But if the sight clouds o'er, and evil thoughts
Mar and distort those images of grace,
They perish, soul and image, as thou sawest
In the dark wood of warped, degenerate things,
Returning to the uncreated deep.
But, let the soul retain its native ray,
Which is the master-spirit of the eye,
It penetrates the beauteous shows of things
(Such is its nature) to the infinite
That round embosoms it." "Glimpses of this
My first years knew," the Roamer thoughtful, said,
And ocean memories drifted through his mind;
"I do remember me of my dim birth
Beside a pine-hung shore; now mythic lands
Hold less of mystery than that low coast
Where first, a boy, I counted the ninth wave,
And saw it through the emerald swell and gleam,
Make to the beach, and comb, and fall, and shoot
Up to my feet its bright, smooth-sliding foam,
While the long wave resounded down the sands,

And the blown spray bedewed me: whence my heart,
Like a sea-shell, hath in it sounding seas,
Echoing forever. There my childhood grew
With pure attachments bound, spontaneous joys,
To the sea's being; all the wave endues
With light and color shared my boyhood blood,
And made itself the framework of my thoughts
And channel of my feelings; and, ofttimes,
Awe came upon me, unintelligible,
In presence of the simple things of earth,
The dawn, the breeze, the stars, beside the sea.
In the long years of that sea-shepherding
There was one hour I nevermore forgot.
I stood amid the radiance of the noon,
Flooded with beauty; the bright, heavenly curve
Domed the blue deep, and from light's centre poured
On me the benediction of the seas
I had so loved; its winds, its blowing tides,
Voices mysterious, touch and sight divine,
The crests of sunset flung far down the west,
The rosy shallop of the breaking dawn
Breasting the island-breakers, dark a-gleam,—
Uncounted aspects, mingling all their grace,—
Ensphered me; and the gray sea, golden-tongued,
Upgathering invisible mystery,
Flashed through me, wave on wave, its effluence,

Unseen, unknown, unsensed, ineffable;
And all my being with bright passion shook.
Such moments, like the heavenly messenger,
Announce a birth divine; they cannot die;
And never after faded that pure ray.
It crept on human faces, forms of youth,
The smile of woman, hero, saint, and child,
And lit my youth from many a great design
Of mighty artists, where the risen soul,
Above the tomb as on a pedestal
Seated immortal, waited heaven's ascent;
Or crosses, on Judæan mounts relieved,
Led up the eye; or golden clouds enthroned
Virgin and martyr,—Italy enskied
Above her long-lined hills; but most it shone,
Where marble forms immovable of gods
Stayed the one moment of eternity
That ever is, and flashed through time and tide
The radiant presence of a greater world
Of timeless beauty, omnipresent thought,
The element of immortality,
Wherein the universe is lightly borne.
Then came a greater wonder. The ideal
Shone on me from the living forms of men
More than from paint, or clay, or gleaming stone,
Or the fair shapes that light the brooding mind.

I met them in the highways of the world,
Maiden and youth and child, hero and saint,
Sweetened by duty, crowned by sacrifice,
And most that glory rested on the poor;—
The changeless type more easily discerned,
Made flesh. So love had taught my mortal eyes.”
The sun had sunk, and left a winter light,
Pure emerald, lucid in the delicate deep,
Transparent, crystalline, save where the peak
Clothed the pale North with an outstretching glow,
And the far East was barred with crimson flakes:
“More than the object doth the eye avail,
If but the sight be pure,” that fair guest spoke,
And more his gentle smile left unexpressed;
“With such a light is every mortal born,
As well thou provest in thy wanderings;
And if he follow the all-heavenly ray,
He shall behold, though far, the Mount Divine,
The Mount of Vision, where my dwelling is,
The place of the Transfiguration old.
Lift up thy eyes, and see! lo, I am he,
The angel of the Intercessors called,
And in my charge all things of beauty are.
Swift must my going be out of thy sight,
Brief my farewell.” He nigh the Roamer drew,
And touched his flesh, and raised his eyelids up

With hands, whose tender stroke was burning fire.
The mountain-cone was swathed in sunset flame,
As with a mantle; opalescent gleamed
The dying skies; one white and tremulous star
From light emerging, pale with quivering points,
Hung faint upon the orange edge of night,
Whereon the angel gazed; lovely in him,
The form of beauty full incarnate glowed,
The bloom of all desire: instant he passed.

“O, is the beauty of the evening star
The path of thy departure, spirit fair?”—
The Roamer spoke with syllables unheard.
Horizon-low, the heavenly planet shone,
And sank; far off the sweet light died away.

Night fell, the visionary peak went out;
About the Roamer a great darkness drew;
Lonely, he turned to his dim hostel, sleep,
And laid his head upon the dreamer's stone.

THE ROAMER

BOOK IV

"O FAIR young face," a voice began aloof
When, dark, the Roamer woke, "how few there
be

That pass this limit with such lips as thine,
An-hungered and athirst! " and nigh him rose
An old man's form against the doubtful sky.
Flowers of the desert held he in his hand,
Slight, grass-like spears that bore a bloom minute,
Whereof he seemed to proffer flower and stem.

"Take, eat," he said, "the food the waste provides."
The wondering Roamer pressed them to his lips,
And, scarce the leaf withdrawn, it seemed from
thence

The very bloom and odor of the grape
Moved, flower and fragrance, in his racing blood,
And bore his soul aloft on vital tides.

"What faëry herb, what bright immortal root
Distils, like sap within the virgin bark,
Its rich elixir in this humble plant?
What desert realm? What hermitage?" He gazed

With longing toward those mighty solitudes
Arisen, where far he swept the breaking West.
O whence refreshed from unknown springs divine
The cry, the dark desire, the need to go
Whither the wild heart will? 'T was such a morn
As when in frosty autumns of the North
The honking geese cross the untraveled vague,
Unseen aloft, or heaven-high wedgewise move,
Wild birds in the void air; forward he saw
Where the wide world, westering with dune and
butte

Sky-bordering, lifted on the rolling plains
A harsh, scant herbage of dull silvery leaf,
Flooring the solemn dawn. "The herb of grace"—
He heard the old man speak—"grows everywhere;
But sweetest, on the desert border found
And crushed, gives up its fragrant virtue here."
Then the awed Roamer swift bethought himself,
Replying, "Such tranquillity is thine,
So saintly bends toward earth thy age serene,
Scarce mortal thou, though mortal sounds thy
voice."

"Mortal—immortal—they are veiling names
Of what is timeless," that old man returned;
"The mystic hours, whose revolutions flash
Shadow and sun upon the ways of men,

Can give no gifts but what they take away;
Yet aye abundant pours the living stream,
And all creation fleets through one fair form,
That in the moulding mind endures, divine
Reason, that passes not, nor on it falls
The shadow of dark death, nor any change
Of nature, and it grows not old with time.
It lights the mortal chamber of the soul.
There comes, as on a stage, the motley world;
There shine great truths, great actions, on one plane;
And all that is fills but a player's scene,
Where time is not, nor place; there, to the soul
The passing world, unfolding like a flower
From unseen roots, that shuts at eventide,
Is but a phantom-bloom and beauty's shade,
Echoing far off divine reality:
Such song the morning-stars together sang,
And at creation's birth praised light unseen."
Then in the Roamer stirred his dreaming youth:
"So once I sang with lifted hands to heaven
The beauty that the dawn hath never clasped,
The peace that falls not with eve's blessed dew,
The mystery within the seas and stars;
All vision is the woven veil thereof;
There works the secret craft that builds the world;
There shines the ray that puts earth's glory on;

There wakes the chord that tunes the whirling
sphere,

Amphion's art, heard in the rising deep,
And should it falter, heaven and earth were dark."

"Whence hast thou music, and the charm of words
Few speak and live?" the old man, thoughtful, said:
"Another dawn is shining in thy face."

Then, gladdening in his heart, the Roamer spoke;
"Love taught me this, whom mortal once I knew,
And felt upon my cheek his burning bloom.

O young, prophetic years! how long I live
With half my heart in the other world!" O'erhead
Morning was kindled in the lonely sky
A lonelier presence; as in Moslem lands,
Limned on the desert drifts and silentness,
Pilgrims to Mecca or to Kairouan
Seem waifs of nature, there he stood enskied
While the unclouded glory, pulsing on,
Beat up high heaven, and dipped with golden wing
The azure element, and made earth pure
With the celestial miracle of dawn.

"Whatever rapture fills that other world,
Build thou, ere night, thy earthly mansion fair,"
The old man said, and drew the Roamer on,
A little way, along the radiant rock,
Beyond the great Divide; its crown disclosed

Southward a canyon in the hollow hills,
Deep-sunken, o'er whose pink and yellow crags
Rose spires of tree-tops, rooted far below;
Sea-like, with heavenly straits, the distance shone
Far off, and melted into phantom lands,
Desert depressions, lost in filmy air.
"Yon is the gate, and narrow is the way,"
The old man, hastening, spoke; and from his lips
Dropped but few words, or none, as time were
scant;
Till at the cleft arrived, "Descend," he bade,
"Only the desert hath reality.
Now on the border long I range denied.
So heavy-laden am I with the weight
Of earthly thought; the wisdom of the poor
Shall light thee onward to thy journey's end.
Blessèd art thou!" Dumbly he bowed his head;
As one abandoned, on the light he loomed;
And something in the old man's attitude
And gesture made the Roamer to refrain
His farewell word; he down the dark defile
Sank silent and his silence courtesy was.

On the steep slope of an immense ravine
Profound, dividing upon either hand
Green chasms of the valley canyon-walled,
He found himself; a moment yet he saw

The aspiring forests island the great gulf,
Primeval growths; soon in dark solitudes
He entered 'mid impenetrable shades,
By trunk and arch of nature's majesty,
The haunts of primal awe, man's earliest dread.
Ah, never had he felt such loneliness
Assail him, nor his soul so isolate
And lost in nature's vast, as in the hush
And shadow of that many-centuried wood!
It seemed coeval with creation's morn.
Monarchs of time stood there, like stem and limb
From Lebanon or Himalaya brought,
Hoar cedar, tall pines, dim sequoias huge
That still on earth salute the stars and winds
As equals, mixing with the heavenly roof;
So stood this forest grove majestic,
O'erblown with leafy flora of the vale,
In immemorial secular growth obscure.
The abode of unimaginable peace
Life seemed within the valley, and the soul
An alien in that natural paradise.
Sounding remote as reefs on unseen seas
He heard the long-drawn soughing of the pine
Begin, and die away down the dark trail
In the dense wild; there, brooding what should be,
He rounded pillared rocks, and found a shelf

Open and broad, the highway of the gorge.
So solitary was the solemn road,
So dark with loftiness of tree and rock,
Savage, austere, sublime, he scarcely saw
A form that passed, until it turned and looked
With unremembering eyes and face that seemed
The carven impress of a thousand years,
So was it typical and motionless.
Such brows upon the silent traveler gaze
From reaches of Egyptian colonnades,
Sphinxlike, unindividual, but man,
The immemorial creature of the earth;
Doubtful there shot a momentary gleam
Of recognition through him, as it passed;
And others, singly, up the gorge emerged
Out of the fire-scrawled rock and towering herb
In rare procession,—faces of mankind
That pass through generations, race-renewed;
Life piled on life had stamped their mortal mask;
Each gave him one long look, and disappeared;
And once a name had leapt unto his lips
And died in the vast silence, as in tombs;
But none accosted him out of that dark
Epitome of life, till all were gone;
And, weird of heart, he urged his counter-way
Unto the valley's outlet, and a land

That seemed an incantation in the morn,—
So instant broke the vast expanded scene
Of a far country, stretching to the West,
Into the infinite of sky and plain,
With black oases spotted, drifted gold,
A place of marvel; long he stood at gaze,
Before it silenced, and his heart was hushed.
Slowly he woke from that undreamt disclose
Of power, of vision, and of mystery.
Larger of soul, and drawing ampler breath,
And even with a silent joy inspired,
He sought the sheer descent, and winding down
By knife-edge ridges and dry torrent beds
Debouched below upon a fair demesne,
A tropic spot; an agèd terebinth
Hung, half-reclined, above a sunken slab
Of marble, and a rose-bush blossomed nigh,
And in the shade two pilgrim forms reposed.
Eastern their garb, and dark their hue; they seemed
Companions, met by chance after long time,
Far travel, and in memories immersed;
He, unobserved, beside them drew, and sat.
“That day at Broussa whence our wanderings were,
When, boys, we left the mosque’s bare, upper room,
The cradle of our youth,” one of them said,
His face half-bid, “where life and prayer were all,—

The small, bloom-windowed, sweet, ascetic cell,—
And took the staff of the world's pilgrimage,
Farewelled the stork's tower and the green-domed
hill,

And by the poet's grave unclasped our hearts,—
How hast thou fared, brother, since then? we sought
The light divine." The other, smooth of brow,
High-featured, pale, large-eyed, answered, "I prayed
Among the mulberries at the road's steep end,
And with the staff of prayer journeyed thence-
forth

In this life's wilderness; cities and schools
I threaded, unappeased, and fled, still young,
Into the desert of the boundless sands,
Eve's scarlet deep, and still night's hollow vault
Star-swarmed, where most the Omnipotent is nigh.
The heavens declare His glory, infinite power,
The wandering life His will, implacable fate.
There the Heaven-dweller, sole supreme, became
My habitation, and His works my world,—
Symbols of Him through whom alone they beam,
Best-known where shepherds watch their flocks by
night

And see the upper deep, with angels thronged,
Hosannas sing,—so light from Him derived
Radiates through nature, which, His mirror, shines.

Fain would I that such unity with Him,
Through awe and prayer, may at the last be mine,
As glorifies His humblest instruments!
Humblest is best. As lilies by the well
Drink of His loveliness, and fragrant blow,
Would that my mortal might put on His grace,
My raiment of the dust show gleams of Him,
My thoughts be incense burning in the flame
Of beauty that His omnipresence is,
My mind a spark of His omniscience!
So might my being—how blest!—transmit His rays,
And as the raindrop hangs the bow in heaven,
My finite manifest infinity!
Eternity informs this body of time,
The cosmic universe, in star and worm
The sacred hieroglyphic of His name:
All sight a means of seeing the Unseen,
All sense divine Transfiguration
Of Him, the Incommunicable.” “Thought
Is but the shell of knowledge, as this world
Is but the shell of being,” darkly said,
And low, his comrade, answering: “I have lived.
Though nature be the parable of Him,
He spoke not to me by the burning bush
Of beauty, nor the host that leads the morn.
I never found Him. Even from youth’s first flower

Passion of life I knew, the quick fierce joys
Of action, and dull vintages of pain.
Ah, many a breast to me has night unsealed,
Scarred with dark writings of God's secrecy,
But most my own: dyed in the blood of man
Is all my knowledge; in the human flood
Deep was I dipped, and took the mortal stain.
Though sin be on my soul, woe in my heart,
So was I darkly mixed with all my race,—
One flame of life, one swift aspiring joy,
One body of delight, one weight of pain,
One spirit of man, One human, One divine.”
“ Whence hadst thou this? ” The Roamer, venturing
near,
Made him a third in that close company,
And drew upon himself a face of dream,
So spiritualized was the dark flesh,
With sorrows ploughed, and intimate with pain.
“ Brother,” the voice replied with courtesy,
“ Such knowledge came not at the first,—I knew
The bittter taste of life, the solitude
Of evil, and the desert of myself.
Ah, long I lay in that abandonment,
Till one, a stranger youth, beside me crept
And bared his bosom; therein I beheld
The wingèd soul mired in its own sweet clay,—

Wild heart, wild head, and, in the tragic act
Itself revealed, high heaven beyond all reach,—
Body and soul, the image of myself,
As in a glass reflected and deformed,
Though in another birth: such had I been,
Such was, the mould and feature of despair;
And swift desire sprang flaming from my breast
To be his helper unto beauty lost.
I drew him to me, cherished him, and loved.
There God found me, even in the touch of hands
And hearts, that doubled the great universe,
Making us one; nor one with him alone
I had become, but wheresoe'er I went
And spoke unto the hearts of fellow-men
Though fallen and in desolate misery sunk,
There life in all made answer, ' 'T is thyself! '
It may be that God lives in star and flower
And others find Him there; but me He found
In my own heart, which is the heart of man."
"Allah il Allah! wonderful his works! "
Intoned the Moslem; but the Roamer hid
The words within his heart, and well he marked
The soft light dwelling in the other's eyes,
The ray of love, bright beaming, as he spoke.
' Life is the only comment on the heart
That speaks within us, eloquent of love,"

The Roamer said; " God grant us so to live,
With others' lives commingling and involved,
Until the larger self takes form in us
Whereby we rise to perfect charity,
One with mankind." " And dost thou live? "
Broke the low whisper hesitant from him
Who bore life's stigma; " more than mortal light
Clothes thy bright limbs, and even as one of us
Thou seemest discarnate, though to eye and ear
Thou art all human, as a mortal dream
Is figured thought." " Love held me in his grace,
And from my birth I sleep upon his breast;
To learn of him is life "; the Roamer said:
" I go to learn, treading the pilgrim's way
Through lands I know not of. His will be done! "
And on the instant risen, he turned, and bade
God's peace be with them, and they heard amazed.

By flower and shrub the rough way wended on
Pathless, by rise and gully, brush, stone and sand,
And lost itself upon a stretch rock-pronged,
As 't were a place of graves, a bandit-hold.
The black stones in the brilliant sunlight stared,
Mysterious and forbidding, as by each
Some dark-browed danger lay, silent, concealed,
But none appeared; only the rank reed sighed,
And melancholy cast a shadow there

To ruins known, that crumble in the sun,
Shadowless, noiseless, lifeless, left of man
Unto the footing of forgotten years
And years to be forgotten; rubble and stone
Made difficult the way; but soon o'ercroft,
The dismal tract upon the level plain
Showed like a wave, black-crested, on the sea,
Horizon-high; now straight before rose up
What seemed a natural stone of antique rite,
A boulder rude; and, thither drawing close,
The Roamer heard one cry who stood erect
Beneath it, like a guardian of a gate,
And like a leveled spear his challenge was:
"What dost thou in this haunt of memory
Where I abide, alone of all my race,
Exiled from man?" The Roamer touched at heart,
Made answer, "Exile too am I;
A stranger from new lands and seas far off,
I seek the fair companions of my soul
Whom life to me denied, nor could I know
Their light and leading, nor their burden share.
I pray thee to receive me as a friend."
"A friend!" The sigh he drew echoed a woe
From long-past years beyond the reach of time,
And more the lover than the warrior showed
In his remembering eyes and wistful tones;

“ One such I knew, and from my childhood’s hour
He drew me with him, set my heart aflame
In boyhood, and unfolded my soul’s flower,—
The passion for my race that in me grew,
And swelled my breast, and, full in youth, burst
forth

The glory of my country’s chivalry,
Rose of her garden, spearhead of her wars,—
O why recall? Why mourn? Why chronicle
The tears of time that every people knows,
Fulfilling destiny on fatal heights
Of high achievement to its last dismay?
I was the incarnation of the land;
I drank its life, I treasured up its soul;
I was made one with it, its voice, its deed,
Its hope, its triumph, its catastrophe.
Now blown about the desert world is all
My empire; and its breath, a memory,
Dies from the lips of time; and here I bide
’Mid scenes that are as ghosts of vanished years;
For, as at times men look on earth and sky,
And see lost recollections of a world
Once theirs, so fair, so dear, so intimate
They shine upon the eye and reach the heart,
Thus in the waste dominion round me strown
The immortal shadow of my own sweet land

Smiles from its ruins; on the rocky verge
The past gleams visionary; in the noon I see
Prone columns and huge capitals o'erthrown,
A tract of marble desolation piled,
Edged by the bright sea where I tasted death."
Even to the Roamer's self the landscape round,
As when the wind breathes on a field of wheat
And lifts the poppies, laughter of the spring,
Seemed by the dying gleam of time o'erswept;
An instant—such illusion is in words—
He saw the symbol of the mighty world
Fading away, lost, recordless, annulled;
Then, waking from the momentary trance
And shadowy seizure dim, he knew himself;
Bright o'er him soared the sweet, eternal sky,
The home and eyrie of the bird of time
Forever,—“O calm, ageless blue,” he cried,
Our house of life and temple of our faith,
What destinies unroll in thee agelong! ”
He turned unto the desert prince, inspired:
“Fortunate is he born who lifts his land
Up to the heights of greatness, his bright death
Immortal, in its glory who expires!
He has advanced the world, whate'er his day,
And on his shoulders borne the orb of fate
Up the steep slopes of time unto God's feet.

Nation to nation calls, race unto race,
Englobing and dissolving, bodied o'er
In larger units, nearer to our goal,
The incarnation of humanity.

I cannot cease from belief in the To-Come,
The top and crown of worship of the past;
For I was bred in reverence of the great
Fathers of men, who gave their names to tribes,
Cities and lands, and are their memory,—
Founders of states, though state and land be lost,
Sires of mankind, and saviours, though they die.”
“Where are my soldier-mates?” the chieftain cried,
“Brothers-in-arms, my children in the fight,
My battle-brood,—young, golden eagle-brood—
That drank the morning as the wine-cup, flung
The rose of youth into the face of death,
And rang the laughter of the sword above
The waves of onset, as they sank to night
Down the dark depths of the To-Come?” He
paused,—

“The sun shall come again, the spring return;
Cities shall rise and fall, dominions fade;
And death be swallowed up in victory.
Time is the victor, and he mindeth not
The sacrifice. Both king and kingdom die.”
“Kingdom and king are interlocked by fate,

And no hand breaks that bond through endless
time,"

Returned the Roamer: "Thou hast proved it well,
Prompted within by the undying spark.

The individual and the mass are one.

In my own youth I caught the sacred lore,

In a far country that thou knowest not of;

There lies my land, a seat of growing good,

A seedplace of the nations, storing time,

A harvest of the universal earth,

A power whereof the armament is peace,

A state proceeding from all wills made one, .

A realm where all men reign, a commonwealth,

A stronghold of mankind; there all men toil,

And wisdom labors on the shield of truth,

And on the stammering lips of knowledge shapes

New ages rising, and prophetic hears

The pæan of the final victory."

As signal fire to signal fire is flashed

Across dividing seas, the young prince heard

And kindled, and as light revisits late

A sunset peak with the sweet rose of eve

After the sun is gone, and soon dies off,—

Touched with that message of the dawn, he flushed

And faded, to his own dark self withdrawn

And silent mystery; reverence he made

The towering clouds, the long-drawn mountain-
lines,
The painted plains, the luxury of light,
The expense of power and beauty's ornament,
The glow and sculpture of the dædal earth
Along the roadside, where by nations crawls
The caravan of time? O traitor world!
Thou art the inn of poverty and crime,
The warren of the poor wherein they breed
Hunger and cold, passion and woe, and death
In perpetuity. Kingdoms and states
Are but the shining surface of the flood,
Time's phosphorescence; deep below dips down
The unrecorded misery of the mass,
Creation's underworld. What is 't to men,—
The glamour of great ages yet to be
Wherein they shall not share? or glory gone,
A nameless epitaph? " On the last rise
The landscape sank beneath him, desert-wild,
White valleys of the chotts,—a far-strown world
Of endless desolation, chequered tracts,
Spotted with salty crusts, dim palms and wastes,
Interminable dearth; and in the way
Two, robed in white and worn with travel stains,
Girt with the knotted cord, scanned the strange
sight;

Them soon he overtook with noiseless steps.
"Of such a land the holy father told,
Who bade me follow him," the younger said,
"A place of ruin and old chaos stilled,
As on the moon an earthly visitant
Might gaze on planetary death around,—
The ribbed sea bottom from its base upturn,
Volcanic holocausts of shattered hills
And sandy oceans blown by warring storms,"
And, startled, he beheld the Roamer nigh,
And blessed him coming: "Peace abide with thee,
Who enterest these dead lands inhospitable!"
He said, upon the Roamer's face intent.
"How is thy countenance fair!" abrupt he spoke,
As to himself. "Welcome I seek," replied
The Roamer, "who have nought to give in turn;"
And humble stood, as one who begs a boon.
"True poverty is all our riches here,"
The elder answered: "love is all our wealth
For many a league foregone, love all our alms
Given or received,—God's love." "Tell me of love,"
Struck by a sudden radiance divine,
The Roamer said, devout,—and, on bright sands
As on the threshold of a world to come
Reposing, harkened, as to one in dreams,
The wisdom of the desert, golden-mouthed.

"Love drew my youth from the sweet soil of
France,"

Sorrows of exile toned the mellow voice
That first had spoken; "tender yet my age,
Called by strange gospels of the silent heart
That beats in all men—so the Master said—
And ever hears a spiritual voice
Amid the worldly strife; that voice I heard,
Brooding above the Master's sacred charge,
Who, laying his thin hands upon my youth,
Thus vowed my life to lowliest ministries:
'To have no name; to touch no gold; to own
City nor country where to lay thy head;
To wander through the world, the friend of him
Who has no friend, easing the daily weight
Of this so bitter life; to brother all,
But bind no dear companion to thy side
Save to divide his burden; not to think
Of earthly recompense nor heaven's reward;
To hope no gain; to fear no loss; but live,
Free from the mortal tangle of the self,
For others only, humbly so to serve
Among the humble; nor make state nor race
A barrier to the soul; but give thy love
No bound, no limit; so the mighty heart
Of the whole world shall beat against thy side,

Great with the flooding passion of mankind
To make one kindred of all human bloods,
One living soul.' " He paused, as if o'erawed
By his own mounting thoughts and visioned sight,
Conscious anew of the evangel winged
Of his great Order: then impassioned rose
The Faith Triumphant, breathing upon lips
That sang its martyrs: " Orphan though he be,
He liveth best who giveth up his life
To live incorporate in other men.
Blessèd is he who hath forsaken all
To lose himself within the larger world
Of indivisible humanity.
A million hearts shall be his earthly home,
And silent bosoms store his virtue up,
Unknown and unsuspected; it shall grow,
Ripen, and multiply the good of God,
And bring the slow millennial harvests on
To clothe the world." How salt the desert gleamed
In the bright sun resplendent, whereon fell
The Roamer's gaze! The other, in quick turn,
As if antiphonal to that high strain,
Took up the Word: " Abandoned and deprived,
He is most rich who, vowed to poverty,
Hath nothing to receive and all to give;
And who beholds him learns the works of love.

Love is the bread that feeds the multitudes;
Love is the healing of the hospitals;
Love is the light that breaks through prison doors;
Love knows not rich nor poor, nor good nor bad,
But only the beloved, in every heart
One and the same, the incorruptible
Spirit divine, whose tabernacle is life.
Love, more than hunger, feeds the soul's desire;
Love more the spirit than the body heals;
Love is a star unto the darkened mind;
And they who truly are Love's servants leal,
And follow him, undoubting, to the end,
Beyond the bounds of human righteousness,
Past Justice and past Mercy, find at last,
Past Charity, past Pardon, Love enthroned,
Lord of all hearts, incarnate in man's soul."
Like silence after music fell the close
Of the Word singing in the wilderness
That lay so brightly calm, so weirdly still.
The landscape, glittering like a serpent's eye,
Hypnotic glared, and dumb the Roamer's heart
With all his life went echoing, like a shell
That holds, within, its melodies concealed.
"All these things have I heard from my youth up,"
He broke the spell, "taught by the bards divine.
I do remember my dear Master said,

'To him who knows what love is, love is all';
And on my ring I bear the blessed words,
'Love is but one thing with the gentle heart.'
Lo! on my hand the golden circle bound!
Sweet is the gospel of the gentle heart,
Wherewith I travel." On the little ring
Centred their eyes. "What talisman hast thou,
That holds thee safe 'gainst disarraying death,
Where most his empire rules? The living word
Is yet the burden of thy breath!" they cried,
Together risen, awe-struck. "Love is my lord,
And in his charge I go," the Roamer said;
"Pray for my peace!" "Thy faith companion
thee!"

He heard behind him; and the burning sands
Received him, the deep silence, and the sky.

Far on one hand he left the blanchèd lands
Of the death valley, hollow and malign,
That rolled its lost horizons to the South.
Westward he trailed the rock-bound desert route,
Where narrowest, like a gulf, the great chott ran,
And crossed it, and on level reaches came,
Steeped in the sun, lapped by the bathing blue,
The kingdom of the sands; no life was there,
But shadowless, majestic, nature's power
Moulded her image of the earth and sky,

Where man was not; only the white sand-sea
Lifted its crests, and rolled its arrowy drifts
Frozen in the act of motion, and clomb up
Rare buried palm-clumps, islanding the waste.
How still it was! the elemental world
In its own universe! as from the first,
Before man was, it filled creation's dawn!
The Roamer felt himself a stranger there
As in another world, an older star,
'Mid heavens bright, unknown; and, as he moved
Across that panorama without end,
Sterile and clear, the soft, transparent air
Evoked far objects, the blue glow intense
O'ercanopied the sands, and imprecise
The lines of all things wavered; and, behold!
As when a sailor, cast up by the sea,
Upon an alien coast, in a far land,
Wanders 'mid rocks and hills, and from some cliff
Sees a green valley smile, at half a league,
He saw, nor far, a quiet water set
By scattered palm trees, like a silver streak,
And o'er the placid bank their tall stems leaned.
How firm they cut the insubstantial air,
Like some fair island, seen by barren seas,
Aloof, indifferent to human life,
Still as a vision in a charmed dream,

Beauty dissevered from reality!

"Mirage!" the Roamer murmured 'neath his breath;

And long it clung unto his patient eyes,

Remembering other days and visions gone

That yet within his mind were luminous,

Though never on the earth their sweet light fell.

"Illusion! how dost thou companion me,

Me, the Truth-Seeker!" scarce he spoke aloud.

"Art thou, O Dream, its only mortal mould?

For I was born a dreamer, and fair things

Wove mystery in my eyes; beauty o'erflowed

With spirit, and with emanating forms

Peopled my morning world; oft to my side,

With welcome in their silent eyes divine,

Companionable the young gods came; and, most,

Love stood beside me, gazing eagerly,

And took my hand, and sealed my lips with fire

That in my body burns immortally.

Formless and plastic, like a cloud in heaven

That drinks the sun, earth felt my dawning soul

Glow in that morn, and mould her elements;

And many a shape, body of my desire,

Flushed with sweet light, and faded; and Love
smiled.

Birth after birth to fairer beauty flew;

Form after form unclothed in nobler grace;

And all my rapture was a long farewell,
Flight following flight of sweet creations gone;
And, last, Love left my side without a guard.
Mirage! Mirage! " he sighed; " look, where it
pales! "

And, in an instant, bare the wide sands rolled;
And faintness came upon him, like a cloud,
A momentary shadow; nigh, the West
Broke into little hillocks, as he passed,
And quickly grew, like surges of the sea,
To crests and valleys, hollows of the wind,
Drifted and ridged, as is the driven snow,
With fret and furrow; and he rose amidst
White, mobile mounds, carved by the inconstant
breeze

Unheeded, sculptured like the living hills,—
Wild beauty: and his heart grew prescient,
Ere he beheld him, of a comrade there,
Who moved toward him from the sinking sun.
The loveliness of youth was in his limbs,
And on the Roamer turned his friendly eyes
Love-lit; a round shield dangled on his arm;
By following I lead was its device;
His mien was courtly as of long-past time.
" Chrestoval was I christened at the font,"
He said, " the page of Christ and soldier, vowed

To bear his Cross, to wear his sacred sword,
Storied with causes lost and fallen arms
Of my companions dead; I know thee mine,
Who comest to thy own in the great waste.”
As when the leader of the hope forlorn—
Or win or lose, his victory is secure—
Looks to the setting sun, on the last day,
And smiles to see his liegemen round him strown,—
So sweet and stern the closing of his lips,
The haunted eyes, that seemed to gaze far off
On things unseen, and saw beyond all sight
The heavenly passes; on that mystic face
The Roamer hung intent,—the mouth that seemed
To sweeten with the words before they came;
“In the heart only is the victory cried,”
He heard, amid the silence of the sands
Sounding, “and in the soul its sweetness found.”
And yet a second time the faintness came
Upon him, and the momentary dark;
And when again the white hills round him stood
Clear, with a strange distinctness he beheld
How delicate the fingers of the wind,
The framing of the sandhills how sublime!
He lay by Chrestoval who o’er him bent
Between the sun and shadow; him he guessed
One of the comrades of his youth divine,

The great companions leagued, though only given
One to another by the eyes of faith.
"Comrade," he murmured, "is it thou, indeed?
Yet in the very flower of thy sweet age,
Who bringest the light of unknown loveliness?"
"But not to thee unknown, or any man
Who seeks the beam of beauty in the soul,"
Came the quick answer: "beauty there shines most
And charms men's bosoms; and, implanting thus
The seeds of awful reverence and desire,
Frees the soul's nature; it hath precious friends;
There virtue comes, and mirrors in her shield
Sweet images of virgin purity
In the heavenly mind; there godlike patience bends
The spirit of man to its unending task,
And courage feedeth it with deathless fire;
And hope, the common breath of all men's days,
Lifts over it the universal sky;
Last, honor, the best earthly friend that Love
Warms in his breast, hath in the soul itself
A sacred chapel, pure, inviolable,
Where the young spirit watches till his doom
Comes on him, and he passes to the field,
Where only Love, our lord, is sovereign;
He takes the fair soul into his embrace,
And speeds him to the combat glorious,

Whose prize is noble death." "Love long I knew,"
The Roamer said—what tears were in his voice!—
"Since first my tender years felt the embrace
Of his enlacing arms, warm round me thrown,
And in his face saw beautiful the soul.
Now my sad thoughts adore him, long unseen,
Who in my heart lodges his deity.
Immortal Love! he taught my joyful youth
The yearning of the spirit infinite
For the long kiss of life, whate'er its pain;
And, gladdening in his face invisible,
I do his will, and on his errands go.
Night comes; and I am fain of voice and hand,
The smile, the word, the look, the sight of him,
My morning star." The darkening shadows fell
About them in the lone and silent hills
By sunset fired. "Love," answered the fair youth,
"The more he lives, the more lays off life's weeds,
And in another world he is divine.
But here he wanders in his childhood fond
A beggar, and he clothes himself with gifts,
The fairest in the world; and flowers, whereof
He brought within his breast the heavenly seed,
Here germinate; and beautiful he shows
In every outward part; but lovelier far
He is, when he puts on his manly age,

And inward graces in his fair face beam.
All beauty burns in his sweet passioning,
And echoes to the spirit of desire
That there stands tiptoe; by his minstrelsy
He makes the world one song; but soon he hears
A discord growing on the lyre; he sees
A phantom in the sunshine, in the spring
The rose unblown within the cankered bud;
The dying bird drops songless at his feet;
And all things lack fulfillment; all too soon
The heavens cloud up, strange shadows fill the scene,
And the soul darkens in its mortal cell,
And beats its prison; then, all joyance gone,
Love only hears the clanking of life's chain,
Revolts, despairs, frenzies and wild appeals,
The tragedy of man. How is Love changed,
So flames in him the passion beautiful!
He hath become the brother of the poor,
The twin of bitter want, the mate of pain;
Dearer the victim is, the more he falls;
Then, far beyond the good and evil gone,
Love hath transcended the vain shows of life;
And all his wisdom is the spirit elate,
Selfless, devoted, given to its own,
As if he stood by heaven's open gates
And showed the shining pathway up to light;

And such communion hath he in that hour
With human hearts wherein he entereth,
That if into thy bosom he shall creep,
So strange a joy shall pass into thy flesh,
As if himself were seated in thy breast.
Then shalt thou shake with the first throb of love
That knows what love is; love is sacrifice
Of all that love holds dear unto itself,
Even to the extinction of its hopes, its life,
So that its object live, complete and fair,
Its nature out to its own loveliness
Of act and being." "Thou hast told my tale,
As if myself had emptied all my heart,"
The Roamer said; and over them swift night
Came in the striding shadow of eclipse
Upon the desert sands. "The light? the light?"
The Roamer said; "the light divine?" "The
light?"

Came the grave answer, "from thyself it flows;"
And, in the dark, a soft, dull radiance,
Such as in Italy the glow-worm sheds
On the green leaf, or the dim fireflies flash,
By thousands glimmering in the darkened fields,
Stole gleaming o'er his form, his feet, his hands;
With tremors coursed, he on his left arm propped
Rose kneeling, and within he was aware

Of a great passion, mounting like a sea,
And breaking; and the mystery flooded him
Of a communion unimaginable,
That, interpenetrating flesh and bone,
Vibrated in the motion of his blood
And shook him, darkening wave on darkening wave
Of deep emotion pure; ineffable
The seizure; and the ghostly hills of night
Whitened around him; high in heaven came
A rush of stars in the wide universe;
And Chrestoval stood o'er him; his last look
Clung to that silent face, immovable,
Strange, yet familiar, beautiful, supreme.
Then, upon running waves of darkness borne,
Sank his dear head, and from his mortal sight,
With all that he inherited of earth,
It faded; as one day this world shall melt
And vanish in the passing of the soul.

IDEAL PASSION

IDEAL PASSION

I

My lady ne'er hath given herself to me
In mortal ways, nor on my eyes to hold
Her image; in a flying marble fold
Of Hellas once I saw eternity
Flutter about her form; all nature she
Inspirits, but round her being there is rolled
The inextinguishable beauty old
Of the far-shining mountains and the sea.

Now all my manhood doth enrich her shrine,
Where first the young boy stored all hope, all fear.
Fortune and fame and love be never mine,
Since, seeking those, to her I were less dear!
Albeit she hides herself in the divine,
Always and everywhere I feel her near.

II

SHE is not cold, as mortal maidens are;
She is as vital as the universe,
Like those great powers antiquity did nurse
Upon the breast of being, names that star
The dusky dawn of passion, when the war
Of the created rose above the curse,
And throned for aye the better o'er the worse,—
Astarte's, Aphrodite's avatar,—

The procreant beauty of love marvellous,
Sister of Ceres and of Semele,
The mighty mothers; I have seen her thus,
Drawing Sicilian children to her knee,
While cypress and rose-laurel ominous
Burned in the noon beside the barren sea.

III

SHE is not holy like the Virgin One,
The miracle of nature, simple, mild,
The mother sanctified above the child,
With rapt gaze turned forever on her Son,
In whom the world's salvation was begun;
Deep in His eyes creation undefiled
Rose like a star; whereat my lady smiled,
Before whom heavenly love doth herald run.

Her children are world prophecies to be
Far off ensouled in life mysterious;
Tremendous births, beyond the ecstasy
Of nature's ordination over us;
Immanent in the spiritual sea
Their beauty, and their godhead glorious.

I V

SHE doth not leave me comfortless, nor e'er
Of other lovers envious do I go,
Who knew their ladies in the life below
And after mourned them, whence the frequent stir
Of what hath been doth sadly minister
Images of what they no more shall know;
She, unremembered, is more heavenly so;
And more imperishably unto her

My thoughts mount up, free from all earthly sense,
Regrets, and grief-changed joys, if any joy,
Vain recollections of love's impotence,
And blots that our vexed life below annoy;
My thoughts still meet her in pure innocence,
And manhood but repeats the virgin boy.

V

I BEAR the lyre, and marry voice and song
 Upon the hills, the valley, and the plain,
 And in Apollo's bosom have I lain;
Wherefore I, too, unto that band belong,
Whose momentary music echoes long,
 And like a brook doth to its stones complain;
 I am acquainted with a lover's pain,
And circumstance, and injury, and wrong.

Lo, the felicity I witness of!
 Dante and Petrarch all unenvied go
From star to star, upward, all heavens above,
 The grave forgot, forgot the eternal woe;
Though glorified, their love was human love,
 One unto one: a greater love I know.

VI

How many human loves swarm to my arms,
Although I am unworthy! yet, in truth,
I was a lover from my earliest youth,
And love, even the unworthiest, hath dear charms;
And oft I feel within me vague alarms,
Thick-thronging fears, and inward-turning ruth.
Lest my affections be not things of sooth,
But phantom-fancies that oft end in harms.

Yet, though I seem unto the outward sense
The veriest chameleon of love,
That takes its colors from its ambience,
And on the sweet herb that it pastures of,
Transformed unto its nature, glows intense,
These lower loves mirror the love above.

•

VII

ALTHOUGH I transmigrate from friend to friend,
Yet do I own an undivided soul;
From form to form created things must roll,
And of their transformation is no end;
But in my substance do I never bend;
Still unity my being doth control,
And still I give myself entire and whole
In all my loves, and with my object blend.

I cannot understand this mystery
That so my changeless soul doth multiply;
As many waves as rise upon the sea,
So many motions in me shoreward fly,
Wherever in this world's immensity
I find a heart to break on, and to die.

VIII

ALL earthly loves to me are of the earth;
But not for that are they to me less sweet,
Although I hold within my soul conceit
Of higher things that have a heavenly worth.
In my mortality I take my mirth,
And crown my head with roses, with swift feet
Run in the race-course, and in song compete
With others, and have joys of home and hearth.

For if in exile I should disappear,
And my true friends I never more might see,
Never to love, never to hold them dear,
Save in thought only, happier would they be
Of my light joys, though poorer, there to hear;
Even so my lady hath no jealousy.

I X

AND though my soul mix with the fatal ways
Of nature passioning unto her end,
And of her element I make my friend,
Till loftier heavens shall amend my days,
My lady mindeth not: so my own gaze
Lower than man's creation doth descend
The round of being, where myriads aye ascend
Through nature to the super-solar blaze.

And if she see the lily overblown
And all its pure gold scattered to the wind,
And many a lover in his wars o'erthrown,
She strives not nature's being to unbind;
Eternally to her still climb her own:
Spirit through nature is but more refined.

x

I TRULY wonder what they mean by sin,
The blest, who in the tabernacle pray;
I have not found it on my spiritual way,
The soul's contagion, the black spot within,
Unto annihilating death akin,
That mines with preternatural decay,
And eats the substance of the soul away,—
The soul, in which true being doth begin.

Although I bear all sorrows of the globe
Through love and pity, and them feel and see,
And all things search, and in myself most probe,
I find it not in others nor in me;
With such pure elements did nature robe
My substance, and my senses cleanse and free.

XI

YET often have I wandered from the good,
Grieved my own heart, and marred the beautiful
In action, and transgressed love's golden rule,
And on the wrong side of the battle stood;
Nor seldom have I, even as fancy would,
Of others' lives and fortunes made my tool,
And with my reputation played the fool,
And drunk, and diced, and shown my hardihood.

Ah, then my braggart youth was outward-bound,
And the fair morn a chime of winds and waves;
Full swelled my canvas; the unknown, unfound,—
The inexperienced world my spirit craves,
Called me forever, like a trumpet's sound,
And far adventurers in their ocean-graves.

XII

AY, from the first my soul was outward-bound,
And in my eyes was set their sailor-gaze
Haunting the distance; all my nursing Mays
Broke into blossom to the breakers' sound;
Scarce-budded, from the sweet paternal ground
Was I drawn forth to wandering nights and days,
Early despairs, swift ripenings, quick decays,
And all that in youth's chrysalis is found.

And, yet a boy, I sailed the seas of thought,
And o'er the vague of passion darkly went,
Adventuring all things for the thing I sought,
The true, the fair, the dear, the excellent;
And, trying all things, home I nothing brought,
Till love unto my side grew eloquent.

XIII

Love bathed my soul in the electric flame
That doth with him most intimacy hold;
Love wrapped around me, fiery fold on fold,
The poets' mantles of immortal fame;
Love poesied in my bosom, and went and came,
And of ideal beauty most he told,
Whereby eternal power cast in one mould
Our being and nature's universal frame.

Love opened to me the deep infinite,
Sphere beyond sphere, seas after rolling seas;
Where swam the world, my soul companioned it,
And in its comprehension was my peace;
On the eternal vague did, brooding, sit,
And from creation knew not how to cease.

XIV

UPON the everlasting element

My soul advanced its intellectual ray,

And far before that spiritual day

The world-wide majesty of nature bent,

Rejoicing in the beam that o'er it went

And summoned forth its being from the gray,

Infinite deep, showering new dawns as spray,—

Its sphere my mind, my mind its continent.

But the delighted soul that there surveyed

Its shoreless being and rich sovereignty,

Whereto all things that are, are subject made,

Drew back alarmed before that silent sea:

Of my own solitude was I afraid,

And the infinitude of fate to be.

x v

FULL gently then Love laid me on his breast,
And kissed me, cheek and hands and lips and brow,
So sweetly that I do remember now
The wonder of it, and the unexpressed,
Infinite honor wherewith his eyes caressed
Youth in my soul, then ripening to the vow
That binds us; and he said to me: "Sleep, thou;
One comes who brings to thee eternal rest."

I know not how in that dread interval
My lady did herself to me make known,
So deep a slumber did upon me fall;
I woke to know her being in my own,
The nameless mystery whereon I call
When every hope hath from my bosom flown.

xvi

SHE is not a pale visionary thing;
She cometh not to me in dream or trance,
Nor ever with phantasmal feature haunts
The passages where thought goes wandering
Its shadow-world; night's sky-embracing wing,
That in the sleepy vault all things enchants,
Captures not there her form and countenance;
Fancies of her to me no fevers bring.

But when my conscious spirit doth purest ride
In its full being and sentiency of life,
When reason standeth at her height of pride,
And my quick mind, with germination rife,
Creates, then most in love do I abide,
And nought but her seems real in that love-strife.

XVII

I UNDERSTAND the roseate mystery
Of maiden-bridals in the Bridegroom's arms,
That on celestial sighs spread forth their charms,
And in devotion yield virginity;
The amorous nun, richer in chastity,
The more love round her with his motions swarms,
Dissolves, as if the rose her bosom warms
Only the spirit of the rose should be.

She gives herself unto her spiritual lord
In ecstasy that doth all flesh consume;
Her soul, incorporate in the Heavenly Word,
Already leaves her body in the tomb;
So sweetly, holily, have I been stirred,
Not unaccompanied in the vacant room.

XVIII

AND they who tell me of the nightingale
That sings unto the rose, tell nothing new.
Bloom, happy roses, spread out to the view
Your bosoms to the never-ending tale!
Encrimson all the gardens, through the vale
Scatter your fragrance on the melting blue!
Sing, happy nightingales, forever true!
Warble your love ere yet the thick notes fail!

Pour, Persian boy! and with wine fill the cup,
And still the cup refill ere the guest goes!
Time, that fleets fast, soon drinks the last draught up,
The wine, the page, the nightingale, the rose!
Last in the Sun's inn shall the poet sup,
Who, sole, the vine's mysterious gladness knows!

XIX

O SACRED LOVE, and thou, O Love Profane,
Great branches issuing from the viny stock
Fast-rooted in earth's old primeval rock,
Single your nature is, though seeming twain.
The must of life is all one crimson stain
Of vintage; there all generations flock;
The rosy trampling feet let no saint mock,
The cup divine no reveller disdain!

True love repeals all codes that have defined
Higher and lower in its ministry;
True love hath no diversity of kind,
And undivided must its nature be;
Earthly or heavenly, my soul divined,
Only through passion cometh purity.

x x

O H, could we know with disencumbered eyes
The spirit's consubstantiality
That only maketh men truly to be
Mankind, and to the angels them allies,
Seeing how love their being magnifies
And of those pure affections makes them free,
Whose rosy region is eternity,—
What heavenly argosies would crowd our skies!

We should encounter, then, on every gale
Mighty emotions that our breasts now pen;
Ethereal fleets forever setting sail,
Visions of youth, we should behold again;
And shining on the world's horizon hail
The congregation of the hopes of men.

XXI

WELL from the first I knew how long deferred
My rapture, unaccomplished here below;
Yet must I upon all the winds that blow
Speak to all creatures my adoring word,
So burning in my bosom's depth was stirred
The power of loving; loving must I go,
Though crowning of desire I shall not know,
A soul enamored, of the people heard.

All of my lady is this spreading fire,
And mystical the quality thereof,
That, parted farthest, unto her goes nigher,
And seeming most to stoop, most springs above,
And borne in heaven, unquenchable desire,
Lights upon earth a thousand flames of love.

X X I I

“**F**EAR not to be alone,” my lady said,
 “Nor care thy heart to centre and confine
 On any mortal thing; but be it thine
Alike on good and evil still to shed,
Sunlike, thy nature; so the fountain-head
 Of all that is, doth unto each assign
 Some portion of the element divine
That liveth, and abroad its glory spread.

“Love that toward thee its answering motion takes,
 A thousand-fold shall thy life-current heap,
Whereof already prescience in thee wakes;
 A river of the world, that flood shall sweep
With many voices on; full-banked, it makes
 Out, far out, to the unimagined deep.”

XXIII

"Love purifies his acts," my lady said,

 " As first Apollo in his Castaly

 His votaries dipped, and in thy turn dipped thee,
And healed thee of thy wounds of hardihead,

Whom great desires into great perils led

 And made thee bonds even of thy liberty;

 True service of the god, whate'er it be,

Doth in the action heavenly pardon shed.

" Only great sorrows can him greatly bless

 Who shall from great ideals his nature draw;

Who doth no other lord than love confess,

 And aye shall own not any other law,

Great raptures shall be his, and great distress,

 And innocence whereof the world hath awe."

XXIV

WHO hath not kissed the rose's tender leaf,
And sighed to think how easy 't is to show
To silent things of beauty the heart's woe,
And soothe with loveliness the spirit's grief?
How many an Attic stele's fair bas-relief,
That only now in memory I know,
Has helped me to renounce and to forego!
Of beauty's favors to me this is chief.

When nighest to perfection I have trod,
In art's still dream or where earth's roses burn,
But most where human souls at Hermes' rod
Turn marble-pure, life's deepest truth I learn,—
From the child's kiss, the grave's late-turned sod,—
Love is most sweet that looks for no return.

X X V

I NEVER muse upon my lady's grace,
Nor dream upon her bounty, what may be
Largess or guerdon at the last to me,
Who serve far off and in a lowly place.
I was not fashioned of the suitor-race
Who give their labor and their hearts for fee;
No recompense of my fidelity
I meditate,—not even to see her face.

Only always invisible tenderness,
Hanging about me like a spiritual cloud,
Holds me obscure, and undivulged doth bless
My soul, and in this world doth strangely shroud;
Whereof the meaning I but faintly guess,
Save that it keeps me private in life's crowd.

XXVI

IN what a glorious substance did they dream
 Who first embodied immortality,
 And in warm marble gave this world to see
The earthly art that lifts heaven-high its beam!
Of things that only to the spirit seem
 They wrought the eternal stuff of memory,
 And the invisible divinity
That they so loved, did in their temples gleam.

I have no art to deify the stone,
 Nor genius, later born, to limn or paint;
No instrumental music do I own,
 Of choiring angel or ecstatic saint;
Best by its frailties here is true love known,
 That in the heavenly presence waxes faint.

XXVII

AND they, the Ionians, whose first-born minds
Ethereal bore the intellectual ray
Of knowledge through this realm of night and day,
Where the apparent the true motion blinds,
And change forever into new change winds
And melts in the great world's creative play,—
What power was theirs nature to disarray,
What sight that in the seen the unseen finds!

Creation hath a double garniture,
Twice woven of invisibility;
Beauty and truth shall one another lure,
And each to other aye resolvèd be;
So forms divine shall this sad light endure,
And thought transcend the sphere perpetually.

XXVIII

"AN evil thing is honor," once of old
The saddest of Italian shepherds sang,
And on his mouth the immortal lyric sprang
That through all ages pours the age of gold:
"Not that the earth untilled her harvests rolled,
The rose no thorn, the serpent had no fang,
The sea no furrow, nowhere ever rang
The battle, but that love was uncontrolled."

The reminiscence of all lost desire
That love-defrauded hearts dream on for aye,
Hangs in the words, and rises from the lyre,
Whose ecstasy fails not unto this day.
O Song of Gold! O all-consuming fire!
Victorious flame! O lover-hearted lay!

XXIX

I KNOW not what in other men may sleep
 Of lower forms, which nature knew to shape
 To higher, and from her primal slime escape
To sea, and land, and heaven's aerial deep;
Nor with what stirrings their thick blood may leap
 Of ante-natal slaughter, brutish rape;
 I own no kinship with the obscene ape;
No beast within my flesh his lair doth keep.

The memory of the rose-tree runs not back
 Through the dim transmutations of the rose;
Sphere over sphere, above the solar track,
 The round of heaven greatens as it goes;
So am I changed; though the last change I lack,
 When over love itself oblivion flows.

x x x

OH, how with brightness hath Love filled my way,
And with his glory hath beset my road!
It seemeth that to him alone I owed
Dawn, and the sweet salvation of the day.
Enlightenment upon my soul held sway,
And all my faculties of man o'erflowed
With inward light, that, unobservèd, showed
The path, more brilliant than noon's burning ray.

I did not know it then,—that gift divine,
The beam wherein my spirit walked secure;
I thought the clarity of nature mine,
Which only in him shines, and doth endure;
The track of light behind me crystalline
With truth eternal, he made bright and pure.

X X X I

FROM what a far antiquity, my soul,
Thou drawest thy urn of light! what other one
Of royal seed—yea! children of the sun—
Doth so divinely feel his lineage roll
From the full height of man? the immortal scroll
Of thy engendering doth from Plato run,
Colonnos singing, Simois, Marathon!
Into thy birth such secret glory stole.

The kings of thought and lords of chivalry
Knighted me in great ages long ago;
From David's throne and lowly Galilee,
And Siloa's brook, my noble titles flow;
Under thy banners, Love, devout and free,
Storing all time, thy child, I come and go.

XXXII

MUCH in Bithynia I pondered on
The last god-birth of dark antiquity,
Antinoös, whose golden mystery
The sunset was of old religion.
There in the passing of a world he shone,
And left, unmindful of the world to be,
This marble youth to be his memory,
Beautiful, lost in thought, when all was gone.

Olympus had exhaled into a dream,
And nought was left to man save his own heart.
How could he of himself more nobly deem
Than to transmute his being into art?
And how could human beauty brighter beam
Than in its perfect flower to depart?

XXXIII

WHY, Love, beneath the fields of asphodel
Where youth lies buried, goest thou wandering,
And like a rainbow droops thy irised wing
Above the dead on whom sweet passion fell?
There thy eternal incarnations dwell;
There bends Narcissus o'er the beauteous spring;
There to the lovely soil doth Hyacinth cling.
Ay me! when young, I breathed the Ægean spell.

Once voyaged I—Europe, Asia on each hand—
To the inaccessible, dim, holy main;
Beautiful Ida wooed me, misty, grand;
Scamander shouted music in my brain;
And in the darkness, in the Trojan land,
I heard my horses champing golden grain.

XXXIV

O ECSTASY of the remembering heart
That makes of all time but one stretchèd day,
And brings us forward on life's glorious way
An hour or two before we shall depart!
And thus the whole world melts to timeless art,
And we in the eternal moment stay;
That is accomplished for which all men pray,
And blunted is the ever-fatal dart.

Among the flowering ruins of old time
I played with beauty's fragments; Death and Hope
Upon the dizzy stone beheld me climb,
And in the acanthus-mantled marble grope;
I only heard the dawn Memnonian chime
'Mid the wild grasses and wild heliotrope.

X X X V

REBUKEFUL reason, what words fall from thee?

“What actor-art is thine to doff and don!

Is God, then, an antique tradition?

In whose name dost thou pray, away from me?”

’T is true, steeped am I in idolatry,

Poor poet, bodied of religion!

It is the only food I feed upon.

Drunken with God I must forever be.

’T is true; each vintage yields me fellowship,

That time has crushed from man’s long-suffering race;

But most the name that blessed my childhood’s lip

Bears up my manhood to the throne of grace;

And though my bread in all men’s tears I dip,

I eat it in old Calvary’s weeping-place.

X X X V I

YET am I such that when the morning breaks,
I leave my garden of Gethsemane,
And often will some god companion me
Who from another heaven his lineage takes;
And on the road such sweet discourse he makes
As fills the world anew with deity;
With other eyes all former sights I see,
And in my soul the beautiful awakes.

So move I on, compassed with forms of grace
Who greet me youngest of the heavenly line,
For that strange light that aye shines in my face
From her I love in secret, makes them mine,
And they adopt me into their high race,
Who only through my lady walk divine.

XXXVII

BETWEEN my eyes and her so thin the screen
Grows with the passage of my mortal years
That almost to my human sight appears
The holy presence of the life serene.
The skies of Perugino, golden-green,
Encompass it; and like an angel nears,
Through cypress lights, she whom my soul reveres
And dim through veils of nature I have seen.

Most like the coming of the evening star,
When dawns the night with that sweet miracle,
Her apparition is, from me how far!
But so doth love within my bosom swell,
And in my eyes such wondrous tidings are,
I kneel, expectant of what heaven shall tell.

XXXVIII

O THOU who clothest thyself in mystic form,—
Color, and gleam, and lonely distances;
Whose seat the majesty of ocean is,
Shot o'er with motions of the skyey storm!
Thou with whose mortal breath the soul doth warm
Her being, soaring to eternal bliss;
Whose revelation unto us is this
Dilated world, starred with its golden swarm!

Thee rather in myself than heaven's vast light
Flooding the daybreak, better I discern;
The glorious morning makes all nature bright,
But in the soul doth riot more, and burn;
A thousand beauties rush upon my sight,
But to the greater light within I turn.

XXXIX

I know not who thou art to whom I pray,
Or that indeed thou art, apart from me;
A dweller in a lone eternity,
Or a participant of my sad way.
I only know that at the fall of day
Fain would I in thy world companion thee;
Upon the mystery of thy breast to be
Unconscious, and within thy love to stay.

I lose thee in the largeness when I think;
And when again I feel, I find thee nigh;
The more my mind goes out to nature's brink,
The more thou art removèd like the sky;
But when concentrated in love I sink,
Thou art my nucleus; there I live and die.

XL

IMMORTAL Love, too high for my possessing,—
Yet, lower than thee, where shall I find repose?
Long in my youth I sang the morning rose,
By earthly things the heavenly pattern guessing!
Long fared I on, beauty and love caressing,
And finding in my heart a place for those
Eternal fugitives; the golden close
Of evening folds me, still their sweetness blessing.

Oh, happy we, the first-born heirs of nature,
For whom the Heavenly Sun delays his light!
He by the sweets of every mortal creature
Tempers eternal beauty to our sight;
And by the glow upon love's earthly feature
Maketh the path of our departure bright.

X L I

ADONIS-LIKE, gored by the rough world's wound,
Bleeding and dead full often have I lain;
A thousand times, I think, I have been slain,
And all my beauty strown upon the ground;
And I have heard above me then a sound
Of tears, and hid lament, immortal pain,
Of one for whom my worship was not vain,
Though she divinity hath ne'er unbound

To me nor to another; rose-like there
I felt strange touches on my limbs and head,
A shadow moulding o'er me in the air
Full of the dawning lights about the dead,
And kisses, smothered in a woman's hair,
On my cold face and lips in darkness shed.

XLII

FAREWELL, my Muse! for, lo, there is no end
Of singing of the winged and soaring choir,
Whose flights mount up, and, circling high and
higher,
My heavenly salutations to her send.
I found her upon earth my only friend;
She fed my boyhood with thy holy fire;
She drew my manhood from the world's desire.
Oh, unto my frail state may she yet lend

Her strength, stay my faint heart, and still console
A little longer; with a poor man's bread
Succor my poverty; and pay my toll
To Charon, when to Lethe I am led!
And ever round her shine the aureole
Of my sad verses, after I am dead!

POEMS OF THE GREAT WAR

SONNETS WRITTEN IN THE
FALL OF 1914

I

AWAKE, ye nations, slumbering supine,
Who round enring the European fray!
Heard ye the trumpet sound? "The Day! the Day!
The last that shall on England's empire shine!
The Parliament that broke the Right Divine
Shall see her realm of reason swept away,
And lesser nations shall the sword obey—
The sword o'er all carve the great world's design! "

So on the English Channel boasts the foe
On whose imperial brow death's helmet nods.
Look where his hosts o'er bloody Belgium go,
And mix a nation's past with blazing sods!
A kingdom's waste! a people's homeless woe!
Man's broken Word, and violated gods!

II

FAR fall the day when England's realm shall see
The sunset of dominion! Her increase
Abolishes the man-dividing seas,
And frames the brotherhood on earth to be!
She, in free peoples planting sovereignty,
Orbs half the civil world in British peace;
And though time dispossess her, and she cease,
Rome-like she greatens in man's memory.

Oh, many a crown shall sink in war's turmoil,
And many a new republic light the sky,
Fleets sweep the ocean, nations till the soil,
Genius be born and generations die,
Orient and Occident together toil,
Ere such a mighty work man rears on high!

III

HARKEN, the feet of the Destroyer tread
The wine-press of the nations; fast the blood
Pours from the side of Europe; in full flood
On the septentrional watershed
The rivers of fair France are running red!
England, the mother-eyrie of our brood,
That on the summit of dominion stood,
Shakes in the blast: heaven battles overhead!

Lift up thy head, O Rheims, of ages heir
That treasured up in thee their glorious sum;
Upon whose brow, prophetically fair,
Flamed the great morrow of the world to come;
Haunt with thy beauty this volcanic air
Ere yet thou close, O Flower of Christendom!

IV

As when the shadow of the sun's eclipse
Sweeps on the earth, and spreads a spectral air,
As if the universe were dying there,
On continent and isle the darkness dips,
Unwonted gloom, and on the Atlantic slips;
So in the night the Belgian cities flare
Horizon-wide; the wandering people fare
Along the roads, and load the fleeing ships.

And westward borne that planetary sweep,
Darkening o'er England and her times to be,
Already steps upon the ocean-deep!
Watch well, my country, that unearthly sea,
Lest when thou thinkest not, and in thy sleep,
Unapt for war, that gloom enshadow thee!

V

I PRAY for peace; yet peace is but a prayer.

How many wars have been in my brief years!

All races and all faiths, both hemispheres,

My eyes have seen embattled everywhere

The wide earth through; yet do I not despair

Of peace, that slowly through far ages nears;

Though not to me the golden morn appears,

My faith is perfect in time's issue fair.

For man doth build on an eternal scale,

And his ideals are framed of hope deferred;

The millennium came not; yet Christ did not fail,

Though ever unaccomplished is His word;

Him Prince of Peace, though unenthroned, we hail,

Supreme when in all bosoms He be heard.

VI

THIS is my faith, and my mind's heritage,
Wherein I toil, though in a lonely place,
Who yet world-wide survey the human race
Unequal from wild nature disengage
Body and soul, and life's old strife assuage;
Still must abide, till heaven perfect its grace,
And love grown wisdom sweeten in man's face,
Alike the Christian and the heathen rage.

The tutelary genius of mankind
Ripens by slow degrees the final State,
That in the soul shall its foundations find
And only in victorious love grow great;
Patient the heart must be, humble the mind,
That doth the greater births of time await!

VII

WHENCE not unmoved I see the nations form
From Dover to the fountains of the Rhine,
A hundred leagues, the scarlet battle-line,
And by the Vistula great armies swarm,
A vaster flood; rather my breast grows warm,
Seeing free peoples of the earth combine
Under one standard, with one countersign,
Grown brothers in the universal storm.

And never through the wide world yet there rang
A mightier summons! O Thou who from the side
Of Athens and the loins of Cæsar sprang,
Strike, Europe, with half the coming world allied,
For those ideals for which, since Homer sang,
The hosts of thirty centuries have died!

EDITH CAVELL

THE world hath its own dead; great motions start
In human breasts, and make for them a place
In that hushed sanctuary of the race
Where every day men come, kneel and depart.
Of them, O English nurse, henceforth thou art,
A name to pray on, and to all a face
Of household consecration: such His grace
Whose universal dwelling is the heart.

O gentle hands that soothed the soldier's brow
And knew no service save of Christ, the Lord!
Thy country now is all humanity!
How like a flower thy womanhood doth show
In the harsh scything of the German sword,
And beautifies the world that saw it die!

SEA BLOOD

Written After the Loss of the "Ancona"

"WHOSO offendeth one of these,"—the tale
My childhood conned. O bright Tunisian sea,
That often with thy waves hast harbored me,
What sounds, far-heard, make my old sea blood pale,
Who here first saw the whitening of a sail
Eastward, and thanked God that my lot should be
Beside the ocean's endless alchemy
To breathe life-long the salt Atlantic gale?

Clamor of panic and war's driving shell
Rifting that turquoise-green, that violet floor,
And cries of death parting the foamy sphere!
What men are these who, vomited from hell,
Bloody anew the brilliant Corsair shore
Our fleet first ransomed, to our memories dear?

WEEP for our dead! but more our honor weep!
 Thrown on the Irish coast their bodies drift
 Homeless and stark, and, moving, weakly lift
An idle arm from their eternal sleep,
Where once our infant navy rocked the deep
 In our first years. Ay me! their ocean shrift!
 Up from the gray sea through day's rosy rift
What dread alarums to our new world leap!

So shook the hills above, seas underneath,
 When Roland wound the blast of Roncesvalles
And roused Christ's ancient world with dying breath.
 Answer, O France, where the vast Russias fall!
Flock, England, to the harvest homes of death!
 Harken! again, that Lusitanian call!

ON THE ITALIAN FRONT

1916

"I WILL die cheering, if I needs must die;
So shall my last breath write upon my lips
Viva Italia! when my spirit slips
Down the great darkness from the mountain sky;
And those who shall behold me where I lie
Shall murmur,—‘ Look you! how his spirit dips
From glory into glory! the eclipse
Of death is vanquished! Lo, his victor-cry! ’

"Live thou upon my lips, Italia mine,
The sacred death-cry of my frozen clay!
Let thy dear light from my dead body shine
And to the passer-by thy message say:
‘ *Ecco!* though heaven has made my skies divine,
My sons’ love sanctifies my soil for aye! ’ ”

THE BELL-TOWER

THERE is a bell-tower in my brain, that tolls—
And tolls—and tolls,—night-long, no pause, no rest,—
“*Eugen’*, *Raimondo*, *Salvator’*, *Ernest’*,
Giovanni, *Antonin’*, *Vincenz’*,”—and rolls,
Peal after peal, peace to departed souls!
Dost hear it, Napoli? hear’st, empty nest
Among the violets on Etna’s breast?—
“*Eugenio*, *peace!*” thee first death aureoles.

And unknown names, pulsing along my brain,
(Who lives? who dies?) go sounding like a bell,
Sounding forlorn o’er mount, and sea, and plain,—
Now far, now near, crying the long farewell;
Carso,—O sound immitigable of pain!—
Gorizia, *Isonzo*, *San Michel!*

A SONG OF SUNRISE

On the Morning of the Russian Revolution

To those who drink the golden mist
Whereon the world's horizons rest,
Who teach the peoples to resist
The terrors of the human breast:—
By burning stake and prison-camp
They lead the march of man divine,
Above whose head the sacred lamp
Of liberty doth blaze and shine;
O'er blood and tears and nameless woe
They hail far off the dawning light;
Through faith in them the nations go,
Sun-smitten in the deepest night:—
Honor to them from East to West
Be on the shouting earth to-day!
Holy their memory! Sweet their rest!
Who fill the skies with freedom's ray!

S I B E R I A

The Return of the Exiles

THE gates of the Siberian waste stand wide;
Great joy has thrilled the mighty wilderness;
The message of the Lord has come to bless
The souls in bondage; broken is the pride
Of the invincible tyrant who doth ride
On human hearts, and thrones him on distress!
Fallen he is! his victims numberless
Crowd the long roads by steppe and mountain-side.

So when our Lord descended into hell
And broke the fetters of the spirits in prison,
A glorious company to heaven made way.
What triumph more divine doth history tell
Than Truth from her captivity arisen,
And Faith rejoicing in her holy ray!

THE CAUCASUS

LIFT up your peaks! O sun-struck Caucasus!
You first beheld the scarred Promethean form
On your high cliffs, stretched to the icy storm,
The vulture's beak; the multitudinous
Woes of the ancient world calamitous
Age-long besieged his heart: there, when our swarm
Of golden youth with generous hope grew warm,
Crag-like hung o'er then great Prometheus.

Lo, from the holy East, where light is born,
Tornado-like the globe of glory rears
A fiery sunrise with red battle torn!
On that hoar world, grown old in blood and tears,
The century-waited and millennial morn
Bolts the long lightning of a thousand years.

HO! THE SPRINGTIME!

In the Trenches. Italy: 1917

I

Ho! the springtime!

Springtime sets a young heart thinking.

Then it was spring, when I gave my signore the flowers
of the field,

And my brother brought him great violets that the per-
fumed gardens yield;

Sun, and field-flowers, and violets bound our bosoms and
sealed.

Ho! the sun in the campagna! the flow of the sap of the
world!

The blossom of dawn! the irised sea! the far beach surf-
impearled!—

And all their joy in our bosoms like a flower from the
bud unfurled!

One leap, one thrill, one throb of the manifold pulse
divine

Flooded and blended our being, as the grapes are one
in the wine.

Sweet there was our life together in the garden this side
of the grave,
And the springtime smiling on us was the smile of
flower and wave.
O my heart!

II

Ho! the springtime!
Time of kiss and time of blossom—
Time of faring on the sea's blue bosom—
Time of thinking of another spring—
When we lived, young, open hearts together,
Roved the greening land, the violet weather!—
Clover, poppy, almond-bough
Murmured it then, murmur it now:
"Love is coming! this is it! this is it!
Passes the bloom! oh, woe to miss it!
The voice, the touch, the fond caress
That undivided lovers bless! "
O my heart, how sad is thinking!

III

"Ho! is it spring?" in the dawn I wake up saying.
I can hear, far off, my mother (*poveretta*) praying
For us three—
And Italy!

There where mighty Etna, snow-clad, thunder-torn
 earthquake-riven,
Lifts the breathing springtime to the fire-black heav
Oh, the spring!

Ho! is it spring?
Sì! thoughts, kisses, flowers, caresses!
Time of blossom and endearing,
To dark death forever nearing!—
Time of weeping!
Time of the black hour toward us creeping!—
Signore! O signor'!

Ho! is it spring?
Time of wandering forth on earth's green bosom!
Time of passing of youth's almond-blossom!
Far we wandered, far we wandered, far, and far away
Across the greening lands, across the violet seas, and
 and far away!—
Flowers of the field I cannot bring, signor'.
Thinking, to thee I send the kiss of spring, signor'.

JUSTICE

COME, Lord of hosts! establish righteousness!
And in the hearts of men and nations build
Love's great Republic that the soul has willed,
And with Thy mercy cover our distress!
How many broken realms world-wide confess
The weakness wherewithal man's state is filled!
Pride in our vain accomplishment is killed;
Our hopes, departing, leave us comfortless.

O, raise our spirits from the deadening shock
That, like an earthquake, blasteth city and town,
And ease earth's unintelligible woe!
Millions of men their sorrows interlock
Before Thee coming; prayers Thy praises drown.
Justice, O Lord, high o'er all nations show!

THE MESSAGE

GREAT documents our chronicles afford,
Since the low cabin of the *Mayflower*
Drew the first instrument: and human power
Ne'er found a seat so firm, so long a sword,
As issued thence, clothed in the Written Word,
Which there began in time its sovereign hour:
Whatever storm may rise or tempest lower,
Through lengthening ages is that still voice heard.

Jefferson with that might breathed forth the state;
Washington, thus, moulded its policy;
Lincoln beheld the wilderness grown great,
And with his pen filled it with liberty;
Now is our message to all nations sent:—
Go forth, sweet gospel, freedom's argument!

FANEUIL HALL

O DARLING nest of rebels,
King-hated Boston town,
Whose brood is still a-rearing
To pull the tyrant down,—
Once more to Faneuil Hall, freemen, come!
There's a virtue in the name,—
And the words, they turn to flame,
That breathe from Freedom's cradle and her home.

Old abolition tocsin,
Strike out the present hour!
Throng, men, upon the ringing stones
Whence Phillips drew his power!
His mother's hand along the narrow pave
Held up his toddling feet,
And he swore to make the street
Too pure to bear the footstep of a slave.

Come! once more rock the Cradle
Whence rose our sires free men!
Till all downtrodden peoples
Shall have their rights again!

Send loud cheers echoing round the holy wall!
Hail, to heroic deeds!
Hail, every land that bleeds!
Tongue of the thoughts of freemen, Faneuil Hall!

The pictured lips of patriots
Speak out for the opprest,
And every heart turns orator
And pleads within the breast,
Upon whatever land the despots fall:
Once more, where Adams spake,
Bid the sacred rafters shake
With the roaring popular voice of Faneuil Hall!

THE EAGLE

THE country of our sires was great of soul;
And, if she draws to battle, it must be
She bares her sword for peace with liberty,
Justice her standard pure, honor her goal.
She mails her hand to write a later scroll,
And share with all mankind her destiny;
Though God has bastioned her with either sea,
Freedom hath no frontiers. Where heaven doth roll,

Fly forth, great Eagle, that of old didst sit
At Jove's right hand beside the wakeful throne!
Gazer on vast horizons battle-lit,
With mightier pinions fly to nobler wars!
Soar in the zenith, heavenly bird, alone,
And o'er the storm bear in thy beak the stars!

THE FLAG

Kiss the loud winds, O darling of our hearts,
And shoot o'er land and sea thy beams world-wide!
How many thousands in thy light have died,
Radiant and sweet! now from our banners darts
A greater glory; in our bosoms starts
A deeper joy; so swells the long-pent tide
Of full devotion to thy sacred side,
And from impatient millions doubt departs.

Advance thy colors in the captain-files
That vanward lead the many-languaged host,
Like mighty waves that lift an angry sea!—
Break thou the German! Miles on headlong miles
Drive him from churchless land and shipless coast,
Till law again for right be sanctuary!

ON THE DEPARTURE OF THE TROOPS FOR FRANCE

WHO are these watching from ancestral doors
The instant passing of our youth for France?
A mighty pageant of the world's romance
Their eyes have seen: it fills their native shores
With an undying moment; wide it pours
On silent hearts, o'erawed, the voice, the glance,
The last, fond gleam of each loved countenance,
And the heart trembles, while the spirit soars.

The generations draw immortal breath
That breathe a nation's soul. From sire to son
The glory of the fathers entereth
The children's hearts, and maketh all as one:
True to the race breaks out the holy flame,
And to all lands doth freedom's blood proclaim.

ALLIES

I

IN the dark of the mine,
In the bloom of the sun,
In the leap of the vine
I heard the war-message run;
Heard old earth softly crooning
And whispering to her own,
The hymn of man attuning
Under republic and throne:—
“Nature my garment, love my creed,
And the thought of man to grow in;
Labor the arm, freedom the seed,
And the field of time to sow in!
What are these mighty labors worth,
If Justice die upon the earth?”

II

I heard the old earth calling
Loud over plains and mountains,
Voices, arising and falling,
In the noise of ocean-fountains:—

“Waken, old allies of man,
Ye, who were borne in my bosom!
He, in whom freedom began,
The topmost flower and blossom,
The glory and fruit of all
The ages have lifted on high
On the heavenmost branch of the sky,—
Shall he fail? Shall he drop? Shall he die?—
What are ye all, if he fall?
What are we all, if he die?

III

Ships for the pilot of time,
Who hath the stars for eyes!
Room for the sailor sublime,
The unroller of the skies!
He, who stretched, past hope's increase,
Freedom o'er the laughing foam,
And on the billows set her home,
The boundless empire of the seas,
Continent-bastioned, island-strown,—
And grasped the keys of fates unknown!
Let nature's universal whole
Press on the common toil,—
Corn, and cotton, and coal!
Copper, and iron, and oil!

What are ye all, if he shall fall?
What you or I, if he shall die?

I V

He harnessed our wild forces;
 He edged our might with mind;
Our ways are heavenly courses
 His instincts have divined:
All light that we inherit
Pours from his azure spirit,
 That hath a higher law—
Honor and freedom knowing,
Justice and mercy showing,
 That our dumb worlds o'erawe:
The truths his lips let fall
 Point the celestial pole;
For the greatest ally of all
 Is man's own soul."

TO S——,

Ætat. 15

WHEN I was fifteen?—let me see,—
It was a year of memory.
Then my nostrils first drew breath
Of the lilies of France on winds of death;
I remember well the mounting fire
That caught my blood, the sweet desire
So to suffer, so to dare;—
That was the eve of my knighthood's prayer.

And you,—you see the awful flame,
Whereat my boyish ardors came,
Light the lands, and leap the seas,
And bathe with creeping glow the knees
Of Freedom in her chosen place,—
The peaceful temple of her race:—
Pray God, your manhood eyes may see,
Clasping the world, her victory!

Christmas, 1917.

R U M A N I A

ANOTHER land has crashed into the deep,
The heir and namesake of that Rome, whose laws
Spread the great peace.—Gray Power, that yet
o'erawes

The thoughts of men, first to bid nations keep
The bounds of right, and earth's wild borders sleep,
O, from thy pinnacle 'mid time's applause
Salute, great Rome, the victim of man's cause,
Thy child, Rumania!—Nay, not ours to weep,

O Latin Race! how doth our debt increase
At every flash of thy unfathomed soul,
Long on the rock of justice founding peace,
While ever round thee new-born ages roll!
Genius divine! when shall thy glory cease!
Rise, rise, Rumania! yet thy soul is whole!

Missing Page

ARMENIA

I

O FAIR Lord Christ, when yet thy face was young
In heaven, and thy witnesses were few,
Humble thy Kingdom here, nor yet grace drew
Emperors to the breast where Lazarus clung,—
When round a dying world thy arms were flung,—
Armenia first unto thy mercies flew,
To the pure gospel through all ages true,
And Him, whose sorrows on the world's cross hung.

She, who beheld the glorious covenant,
When o'er the Flood, at the Creative Word,
Bright above Ararat sprang the bow in heaven,—
What to her agony will thy pity grant?
For unto her through faith in thee, O Lord,
The thorny crown of Christendom is given.

II

BRING, all ye nations, myrrh and frankincense,
As when, with gold and many an orient gem,
About the cradled child of Bethlehem
Like heaven the holy stable glittered, whence
Issued salvation! Pour the providence
Of earthly kingdoms at the feet of them
Who would a world-wide flood of sorrow stem
And, Christ-like, feed the multitude immense!

Nor think Armenia only bears the Cross
Through deserts wild and up her mountain-chain;
But every nation climbs its Calvary,
And hath its consecration; earthly loss
Thousands on thousands find is heavenly gain:
So the world-soul renews humanity.

AN EASTER ODE

1918

*Inscribed in Memory of Lieutenant
Edward Bedinger Mitchell*

DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO PATRIA MORI

I

O RISEN Spring, thy rosy tides
O'er earth's pale shoulder glow;
From heavenly peaks, down Europe's sides,
The torrent sunbeams flow;
Across the verdure-belted zones what ceaseless seasons go!
All, all, indifferent to human woe!

The sea with corpses blossoms, as of old
On the bright Salaminian bay
Ere the gray waste, unrolled,
On the wide-wanderer's eyes flung dim Pacific spray;
Immeasurable spreads afar
The battle-tossing plain of war,
And of fair cities makes a gaunt volcanic scar;
From up-torn realms untenanted
The beasts and birds affrighted fled;

Prone, where the sire his life-blood shed,
The mother on the child lies dead;
The torch, the axe, the bomb, the shell
Paint earth and heaven in hues of hell;
Famine, massacre, slavery fall
On man in horrid carnival.
Great is thy triumph, modern age!
Progress thy bane, science thy scourge,
In sea and air new wars to wage,
And aye to evil fates, incessant, urge
Man's miserable race, on ruin's awful verge!

II

Meanwhile, on blue-horized shores, against Floridian
 skies,
Lone, white cranes, standing, fish; from sunset-colored
 caves
The darting mullet hues the shadow-haunted waves;
In pale, pellucid depths the rude crustacean lies.
 There, with the dædal earth
 The great Creator toys;
 A thousand shapes of mirth,
 A million vivid joys,
 Like grains of coral sand,
 Drop from His listless hand.—
 How should man understand?

III

O Easter moon that glorious
In highest heaven dost roll,
What saw you on the Caucasus
Great with Prometheus' soul?
Where Calvary's shining road makes up from the dark
vale below,
Saw you thorn-crowned beneath a Cross a man of
sorrows go,
The Sufferer, who never dies, but bears the whole world's
woe?
Saw you from Athens' ghostly hand the torch of truth
burn bright,
That spreads within the mind the world where shall be
no more night?
Saw you the Tiber, Seine and Thames, the floods that
shake the North,
Pour inexhaustibly their hosts of stern-faced freemen
forth?
Far as your circling light below hath on our oceans
broke,
Saw you the little acorns grown, blown from the English
oak,
The tree of liberty, that laughs amid the thunder-
stroke?

And Paris, Honor's fount—O name that never time
forgets!—

Look you! how high in our sad heavens her ray of glory
jets!

Look! as your crescent horn but late filled its dark curve
with light,

So grows America on earth amid the nations bright!—
Or is it, crystal sphere serene that hast no mortal stain,
You do not mind, at all, these things, which man has
done in vain?

Oh, can it be, then, nature's law

That her the vision fails,—

The dream divine, and holy awe

That in man most avails?

And know you not, celestial orb

The light men's souls from you absorb

Beholding, when dark deaths they risk,

With highest instincts in accord,

How pure in heaven your golden disk

Haloes the Risen Lord?

I V

Upon the border of eternity—

As some Greek runner, on high mountain ways,

Whom now at eve his speed of morn delays,

Hears the far rote of his own native sea—

I harken unto deathless voices rolled
From the great deep, and silent lyres of old;
And with the sound thereof my lips grow bold.

Man's is another world
Wherein the spirit flies;
Truth at his heart impearled,
A thousand deaths he dies.
O wake again, Tyrtæan lyre
That flung the world's first tyrants low!
Heap up thy urn with holy fire
That now doth in all peoples glow!
Once more the dreadful trumpet sound
Of freedom, Macedonian mound!
Thou, gray Thermopylæ, arise!
Who lifted first on human eyes
Victorious shields of sacrifice,—
And old Simonides thy glory crowned,
Leading the poets' bright, immortal choir.
Still rolls aloft the heroic hymn
Of men, when light and life grow dim.
O sacred bands, dear to the lyre's blest breath
That, ever resonant with noble death,
Sweeps eagle-borne round glory's cloudy wreath,
A thousand dawns we sang you to the fight,
A thousand victories sang you home at night!

Look up, ye hosts! o'er heroes when they die
Opens in heaven another climbing sky!
Sweet is your memory here, and fresh with tears
That wash from shining eyes our mortal fears.—
Peace at the last, and moods all joys above,
Calm thoughts that from just reason take their birth!
Truth at the last, and liberty, and love
Shall, like your glory, fill the ensanguined earth!

TO THE WINGLESS VICTORY

A Prayer

WINGLESS victory, whose shrine
By the Parthenon
Glorified our youth divine,
Harken!—they are gone,
The young eagles of our nest,
They, the brightest, bravest, best,
They are flown!

Lilies of France,
When first they flew,
Led their lone advance
Great heaven through.
Now soar they, brood on brood,
Like stars for multitude,
To France! France!

Save thou the golden flight
That wakes the morn,
And dares the azure height,
The tempest's scorn!

Save them o'er land and sea,
In deeps of air!
Thy grace, where'er they be,
Ensphere them there!

Save them, the country's pride,
Our wingèd youth!
And where they fall enskied,
Save thou the truth,
O Wingless Victory!

ITALY

BELOVED land! O consecrated ground!
That givest the sons of memory a grave,
And, tendering oft the life thou couldst not save,
Soothest the breast's immedicable wound!
Orphans of time and fate in thee have found
What motherhood! What dear repose the brave
Remnants of strife on every land and wave,
Since thy great sires touched the predestined bound!

Heaven set thee as a mark in our life's sea
To light the homeless masters of mankind;
Still on thy precious soil, while time shall be,
Spirits supreme their sacred limit find;
There, at Rome's heart, the whole world kneels to thee,
Truth, beauty, fame,—the soul of man enshrined.

THE RIFLE

In hospital. Italy: 1918.

AGAIN, my rifle, O again to grasp you
And to a soldier's breast once more enclasp you!
You never left my hand, until the wound,
Opening my side, colored the sacred ground;
And through the night, when half my squad lay dying,
I saw, before I fell, our foemen flying.
My well-loved rifle, I was true to you,—
True to my oath! Do you to me be true!

O once again to find dear comrades living!
To feel the battle-thrill! The fierce, sweet giving,—
All, all for Italy! a band of brothers!—
To hear our Captain's voice, high over others,—
“Now, sons of Italy, your foes destroy!
Avanti! sangue freddo! Ho! Savoy!”
My gun, so lie I dreaming, day and night,
When I shall bear you in the last glad fight!

D I A Z

S^HED roses through the soft Italian air,
And strew his way with flowers! with laurel
crown!

Hunter, who brought the Imperial Eagle down,
Flapping to death o'er Alpine summits bare,
And in the towering passes slew him there—
The Austrian! with death and havoc thrown
From shell-ploughed plain and violated town,
Back from the isles of Venice to despair!

Again the Mincio breathes the wind of fame,
And with the proud Piave rears a crest
Of victory in flood! sound, Rome, his name,
DIAZ! and to the festal world proclaim
Italia Madre, clasping to her breast,
Redeemed, Dalmatia, Pola and Trieste!

ALBERT OF BELGIUM

TRUE victor thou, heroic Belgian King,
 Albert, who wouldst not traffic in thy crown!
 A Kingdom's heirloom goes thy glory down,
And with thy people's praise all countries ring;
Thee and thy folk shall unborn poets sing,
 And age to age repeat thy just renown,
 Who held the peril of an empire's frown
With thy land's honor matched, an idle thing.

But rather of the crown that grows not old
 Thy thought, who others saved, saving thine
 own,
 And left this wisdom to thy little state:
Put not thy trust in armies nor in gold,
 Nor on proud navies set the people's throne,
 But by the justice of thy cause be great!

R. N.

Richard Norton, organizer and director of the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps. Began work in France, October, 1914. Died in Paris, August 2, 1918.

BEAUTIFUL in thy death thou liest down,
Sweet, younger comrade of my happier days;
Let others in proud books thy honors blaze,
Whose marble sleep the Cross of France doth crown!
But more to me than deeds of war's renown,
Or any light upon the poet's bays,
Is the remembrance of the sacred ways
We followed, up the paths of Beauty flown,
Before us flying. To another land,
Half the world o'er, she lured us, ever on:—
Still from Art's fragments rose her pointing hand!
Still in old verse her early presence shone!
Now upon earthly shores, alone, I stand;
But thou, dear boy, hast to her bosom won.

LAFAYETTE

WHAT art thou, Time, that men take note of thee!
A boy in years, immortal Lafayette,
Ere he was ripe, put two worlds in his debt
Forevermore! darling of liberty,
He, like an angel, crossed the Atlantic sea,
Clothed on with morning, and, a herald, set
His shining feet where light and darkness met,—
Dead empires and democracies to bel

When first his footstep touched on that bright soil,
From time enfranchised, was his life complete;
Years could not add to him, nor take away;
One of the spiritual powers that, deathless, toil
In human hearts, when youth and glory meet
To bring the sacred dawn of Freedom's day.

SONNETS AND LYRICS.

THE OLD HOUSE

O KINDLY house, where time my soul endows
With courage, hope, and patience manifold,
How shall my debt of love to thee be told,
Since first I heard the sweet-voiced robins rouse
The morn among thy ancient apple-boughs?
Here was I nourished on the truths of old,
Here taught against new times to make me bold,
Memory and hope thy door-posts, O dear house!

Heaven's blessing rested on thy dark-gray roof,
And clasped thy children, age to lapsing age,
Birth and the grave thy tale till time's release;
Poverty did not hold from thee aloof;
Of lowly good thou wast the hermitage;
Now falls the evening light. God give thee peace!

THE ROCK

Slow sloping to its point pyramidal,
A brown rock rises from the ocean waste;
Seaward, great billows there incessant haste
And to their shoreward brethren flash and call.
I see the vast horizon rise and fall,
As when my blood with many raptures raced;
And on that pointed rock, by heaven embraced,
I see a maiden lifted over all.

As shines the rose above inferior flowers,
So sprang her beauty up, supreme to be;
As comes the rainbow on departing showers,
So bloomed and faded that fair memory;
So stood she "on the top of happy hours,"
And drank the sunrise glory of the sea.

THE LILIES

EVER the garden has a spiritual word:

In the slow lapses of unnoticed time
It drops from heaven, or upward learns to climb,
Breathing an earthly sweetness, as a bird
Is in the porches of the morning heard;

So, in the garden, flower to flower will chime,
And with the music thought and feeling rhyme,
And the hushed soul is with new glory stirred.

Beauty is silent,—through the summer day

Sleeps in her gold,—O wondrous sunlit gold,
Frosting the lilies' virginal array!

Green, full-leaved walls the fragrant sculpture hold,
Warm, orient blooms!—how motionless are they—
Speechless—the eternal loveliness untold!

THE MALLOWS

How delicate they stand above the box,
Against the fragile breath of summer seen
Within the garden's walls of emerald green
(Dull cloistral hedges) and tall hollyhocks
Starring the flowery distance! airy flocks
Of veined petals hover there, and lean,
Turned earthward, toward us, in the hush and sheen,—
Our mallows, once more in the well-loved walks!

Oh, blest succession of the lengthening years,
That brings again our annual holiday,
And beautifies this season of our tears
With former sights, and the familiar ray,
Shining upon us from above the spheres,
While flower and shrub keep the old heavenly way!

TO A. S.

On Receiving His Work on Milton

GEORGIA! the very name is flower and sun,
And bourgeons like the summer! straight I see
The robins in your china-berry tree,
A rosy host, ere day is well begun,
And the red-headed woodpeckers that run
About the humming poles' telegraphy,
Hunting the fancied worm!—But here, with me,
Your rose-japonica, too soon undone,

Lies dead. Me, in my northern hermitage,
The "dark" and "miry" ways of March confine,
Who once was free of Enna and Palerm:
I sooth the rugged clime with bard and sage,
And mend the sullen fates, this book of thine
My solace, that doth the inward sight confirm.

PICQUART

PICQUART, no brighter name on times to be
Thy country raises, nor all Europe vaunts,
Thou star of honor on the breast of France,
Soldier of justice; all men honor thee
Who to false honor would'st not bow the knee,
Nor parley with the time's intolerance;
Thou art of those to whom the whole world grants
The meed of universal memory.

Loyal to more than to thy sabre vows,
Kissed on the sword and hallowed oft with blood;
True to thy land's ideal of equal laws;
Champion of human rights; about thy brows,
Thy battles done, how fair thy laurels bud,
Thou lying dead, a victor in man's cause!

A L A M E N T

DIZZILY dropping, to the gulf I fall,
The bright bolt in my brain!
Vainly upon the heavenly gods I call,
Murmuring a mortal's pain.

Deep under deep receives me, and no wing
Bears up the astonished soul:—
Only the fire-eyed stars have ceased to sing.
And the gray sea to roll.

GOLDEN FRAGMENTS

“ THOU CREATIVE SILENCE STRANGE! ”

HATH the lily breathed to the root
What stars from it shall shoot?
What bloom life hath in its fragrant hour,
Hath the seed told the flower?
Hath the dark whispered to the sun
What heaven shall be when day is done?—
Thou Creative Silence strange,
Dumbly bear us, change through changel

THE EBB

Like echoing cliffs above my blood
My senses are; with passion roars
The ear, eyes darken,—life's abud!
But when love ebbs,—Atlantic shores
Sorrow not so when the sea's flood
Back on the sea's heart pours.

THE CHEAT

When my tiny hands would hold
Sticks and straw, they turned to gold.

GOLDEN FRAGMENTS

Life reverses fairy law,
The wealth I hold turns sticks and straw.
'T is a cheat, whichever way,
Boy or man, with gold we play.

VALE!

Rear who will a marble pile!
Of death I know but this:
No rising sun gives back thy smile,
No darkness yields thy kiss.

THE STATUE

All flawed in beauty, shorn of fate,
Deep droops yon statue, sad at heart;
Some Greek isle hides his lovely mate,
And robs his form of perfect art.

THE ONYX

Love, the sexton, from the sod
Gave me this onyx; prize it, you;
A carven Eros, graved "Adieu!"—
Who breaks the image, finds the god.

SONGS UNSUNG

YE songs unknown, unuttered,
That flutter in me unsung,
Would ye had left my bosom
In the days when I was young!

Then had ye flown o'er the sea-waste
And drunk of the outer foam,
Perchance, in the gray of the morning,
Ye had found it,—found it,—home!

Had ye soared in the azure distance,
Had ye cloven the sun, above,
Perchance, in the unknown heaven,
Ye had found it,—unknown love!

L' ENVOY

My song is not for the old,
Whose day is done, whose blood is cold;
Nor for the safe is it,
Mummies of wealth and wit;
But it shall be understood
Of youth and the great life-lovers,
Lost adventurers and far rovers,
And the eagles of the brood,—
Evokers of diviner powers
Dark in the ether-wave,
Who heap the couch of life with flowers
And line with love the grave.

BY GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

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